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MEMOIRS OF CONSTANT

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IMPERIAL RECREATION

MEMOIRS OF CONSTANT

FIRST VALET DE CHAMBRE OF THE EMPEROR

ON THE

PRIVATE LIFE OF NAPOLEON

HIS FAMILY AND HIS COURT

TRANSLATED BY

ELIZABETH GILBERT MARTIN

WITH A PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

BY

IMBERT DE SAINT-AMAND

VOL. III.

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MEMOIRS OF CONSTANT

CHAPTER I

Return to Saint-Cloud — Departure for Bayonne — Terrors of the Empress Josephine — Adieux — A mysterious sachet worn in campaign by the Emperor — Presentiment — Arrival at Vittoria — Taking of Burgos — Bivouac of grenadiers of the old guard — On march to Madrid — Passing the defile of Somo-Sierra — Arrival before Madrid — The Emperor at the house of the mother of the Duc de l'Infantado — Taking of Madrid — Respect of the Spaniards for royalty — The Marquis de Saint-Simon condemned to death and pardoned by His Majesty — Re-entry of King Joseph into Madrid — Adventure of a beautiful Spanish actress — Napoleon's horror of perfumes — Amorous tête-à-tête — Sudden headache — The young actress rudely dismissed by the Emperor — Poverty of the soldiers — The abbess of the convent of Tordesillas — Arrival at Valladolid — Assassinations committed by Dominican monks — Hubert, the Emperor's valet, attacked by the monks — The monks forced to appear before the Emperor — Great wrath — Quarrel pressed on Constant by Grand Marshal Duroc — Constant's distress — Kindness and justice of the Emperor — Reconciliation — The grand marshal's good-will toward Constant — Constant's illness at Valladolid — The fever successfully treated — Return to Paris — Disgrace of Prince de Talleyrand.

HIS Majesty remained but ten days at Saint-Cloud; and of these he spent two or three at Paris, for the opening of the legislative session; at noon, October 29, he set off a second time for Bayonne.

The Empress, who to her great grief could not accompany His Majesty, sent for me the morning of the departure, and renewed in accents of the most touching solicitude the advice she was accustomed to give me whenever the Emperor made a journey. The Spanish character alarmed her and caused her to fear for her husband's life.

The farewells were painful and afflicting. The Empress wished to go along; the Emperor had all the trouble in the world to make her comprehend that this was impossible. Just before starting, His Majesty re-entered his dressing-cabinet for a moment, and told me to unbutton his coat and vest. I obeyed, and I saw the Emperor pass around his neck, between his vest and shirt, a ribbon of black taffeta, from which was suspended a sort of little sachet the size of a large hazelnut, covered with black taffeta. I did not know at the time what was contained in this sachet which the Emperor always wore thenceforward in all his campaigns. Later on I shall have a sad occasion to say to what end he did so.

I set off with a heavy heart. The recommendations of Her Majesty the Empress, fears which I did not try to conceal from myself, and the fatigues of reiterated journeys contributed to my sadness. A like sentiment betrayed itself on nearly every face of the imperial household. The officers were saying that the wars of the north were a mere bagatelle in comparison to that to be fought in Spain.

November 3 we arrived at the château de Marrac.

Four days later we were at Vittoria, in the midst of the French army. There the Emperor found his brother, and some Spanish grandees who had not yet deserted his cause. The arrival of His Majesty electrified the troops, and a share of the enthusiasm they manifested — a very small share, it is true — found its way to the heart of the King, who regained some courage.

We were *en route* almost at once to establish ourselves provisionally at Burgos, which was carried by main force, and even pillaged for several hours, because the inhabitants had abandoned it, leaving to the garrison the care of delaying the French as long as possible.

The Emperor lodged at the archbishop's palace, a superb building erected on a large place, where the grenadiers of the imperial guard bivouacked. This bivouac was a curious sight to see. Immense caldrons found in the convents, filled with mutton, fowls, rabbits, etc., were suspended over a fire, which was fed with furniture, guitars, and mandolins, while the grenadiers, pipe in mouth, gravely seated in gilded armchairs upholstered in crimson damask, watched their cooking and exchanged conjectures concerning the campaign that had but just begun.

The Emperor rested ten or twelve days at Burgos, and then gave orders to march upon Madrid. We could have gone by way of Valladolid, the road being even finer and safer on that side; but the

Emperor wished to carry the Pass of Somo-Sierra, an imposing position fortified by nature, which had always been considered impregnable. Situated between two perpendicular mountains, this position defended the capital; it was guarded by twelve thousand insurgents, and twelve pieces of cannon placed in such a way as to be capable of doing as much damage as thirty or forty anywhere else. Assuredly there was enough to arrest the most formidable army; but what could then oppose any obstacle to the progress of the Emperor?

We halted in the evening of November 29, three leagues from this formidable defile, in a village called Basaguillas. It was very cold; the Emperor, however, did not go to bed; he spent the night writing in his tent, wrapped in the pelisse given him by the Emperor Alexander. Toward three o'clock he came to warm himself at the bivouac fire, where I was sitting, not being able to endure the cold and dampness of a low room assigned to me, in which I had nothing to lie on but some handfuls of very dirty straw.

At eight o'clock in the morning the position was attacked and taken. The next day we arrived before Madrid.

The Emperor established his headquarters in the château of Champ-Martin, a pleasure-house a quarter of a league from the city, which belonged to the mother of the Duc de l'Infantado; the army camped around this house. The day after our arrival, the

owner came, bathed in tears, to ask of His Majesty the revocation of the fatal decree which outlawed her son. The Emperor did all he could to reassure her, but could promise nothing, the measure being general.

There was some trouble in taking the city; in the first place because His Majesty had recommended the greatest moderation in the attacks, not wishing, as he said, *to restore a burnt city to his brother;* and in the second place because the Grand Duke of Berg had fortified the palace of the Retiro during his sojourn at Madrid, and the Spanish insurgents had established themselves there and were defending it courageously. The city was not otherwise protected, for it had nothing but a wall very much like that of Paris. By the end of three days it was taken; but the Emperor would not enter it; he continued to reside at Champ-Martin, with the exception of one day when he visited the royal palace and the principal quarters incognito and in disguise.

The respect which the Spaniards have always displayed for all that belongs to a king, whether they consider him legitimate or not, is an extraordinary thing. When King Joseph left Madrid the palace was closed, and the government established itself in a good enough building which had served for the mails. From that time no one entered the palace but the domestics employed to clean it occasionally; not a piece of furniture, not a book was displaced. The portrait of Napoleon at Mont Saint-Bernard, one

of David's masterpieces, still hung in the grand reception room, and that of the Queen opposite, precisely as the King had had them placed. Even the cellars were religiously respected. The apartments of King Charles had likewise remained intact; not a watch of his immense collection had been touched.

An act of clemency on the part of His Majesty toward the Marquis de Saint-Simon, a Spanish grandee, signalized in a very affecting manner the entry of the French troops into Madrid. The Marquis de Saint-Simon, a French *émigré* had been in the service of Spain since the emigration. He was in command of a part of the capital, and the post he defended was precisely opposite that which the Emperor occupied at the gates of Madrid. He resisted long after the other chiefs had surrendered. The Emperor, impatient at always hearing discharges from this side, gave orders for a vigorous charge in which the Marquis was made prisoner. In his bad temper, the Emperor sent him before a military tribunal, which condemned him to be shot. The sentence was about to be carried into execution when Mademoiselle de Saint-Simon, a charming young person, came to throw herself at the feet of His Majesty, who at once granted her her father's pardon.

The King immediately re-entered his capital; with him returned the high families of Madrid, whom the troubles had driven from the hotbed of the insurrection, and balls, fêtes, festivities, and plays presently began again.

There was at this time in the principal theatre a very pretty young person, not more than fifteen or sixteen years old at most, with black tresses, sparkling eyes, and a ravishing bloom. She had been able — so at least people said — to guard her virtue against the attacks to which it was exposed by her profession as an actress. She had a fine mind, a good heart, a singular vivacity of expression, everything in fact. She was adorable. So said to His Majesty one day M. de B——, who had been to the theatre the night before, and who had returned from it in a state of amazement. M. de B—— added that this young girl had neither father nor mother; that she lived with an old aunt; that this aunt, at once avaricious and depraved, guarded her with special care, affected the strongest attachment for her, eulogized the charms and qualities of her *dear child* wherever she went, in the hope of soon founding her fortune on the liberality of some rich and powerful protector.

So engaging a portrait having made the Emperor express a wish to see this beautiful actress, M. de B—— ran to the house of the aunt, with whom he presently came to terms, and that evening the niece was at Champ-Martin, adorned in a dazzling style, and perfumed with all the perfumes imaginable. I have already said that the Emperor had a very pronounced aversion for odors, and he did not fail to manifest it when I brought this poor girl into his chamber; she, doubtless, had expected to

give His Majesty great pleasure by thus covering herself with essences. However, she was so pretty, so attractive, that the Emperor found his antipathy diminish while looking at her.

It was nearly two hours since I had left the chamber, when I heard the bell ringing hard enough to break the cord; I went in as fast as I could and found no one but the young person. The Emperor was in his dressing-closet, his head leaning on his hands. "Constant," he cried on seeing me, "take that little thing away! She is killing me with her odors; it is insupportable. Open all the doors and windows,—but take her away first, and be quick about it!"

It was very late to send away a woman in that style. However, the order admitted of no reply. I went therefore to acquaint the poor little thing with the intentions of His Majesty. At first she did not understand me, and I was obliged to repeat several times: "Mademoiselle, His Majesty desires that you should withdraw. . . ." Then she began to weep, entreating me not to send her out at such an hour; it was of no use for me to tell her that I would take all needful precautions and provide a soft and closely covered carriage; her prayers and tears did not stop, and she only consoled herself a little when I showed her a valuable present which the Emperor had given me for her. On my return I found the Emperor still sitting in his dressing-room and dabbing his temples with

Cologne water; he leaned on me to go and lie down again.

The Emperor left Champ-Martin December 22, going toward Astorga with the intention of meeting the English, who had just disembarked at Corunna. But some despatches remitted to him at Astorga by a courier from Paris determined him to resume the road to France. Hence he ordered a departure for Valladolid.

We found the road from Benavente to Astorga horribly covered with corpses, dead horses, artillery wagons, and broken carriages; at every step we met detachments of soldiers with torn uniforms, barefooted and without weapons, in a word, in the most deplorable condition. These wretches were all fleeing toward Astorga, which they regarded as a port of safety, and which would soon be unable to contain them all. It was frightful weather, the rain falling hard enough to blind one; I was in bad health, and suffered greatly throughout this painful journey.

While at Tordesillas, the Emperor established his headquarters in the outbuildings of the convent of Santa Clara. The abbess of this convent was presented to His Majesty; she was more than seventy-five years old, and from the age of ten had never left the house. Her mild and intelligent conversation pleased the Emperor much; he asked what he could do for her, and granted her several favors.

We arrived at Valladolid January 6, 1809. There was still a very lively commotion reigning there; two or three days after our coming, a cavalry officer was assassinated by some Dominican monks; Hubert, one of our comrades, passing through a lonely street one evening, was set upon by three men and grievously wounded; they would doubtless have killed him if some grenadiers of the guard had not heard his cries and ran to his assistance. Again they were monks. The Emperor, violently irritated, had the Dominican convent searched; the body of the officer was found in a well amidst a considerable heap of bones, and the convent was suppressed by order of His Majesty, who, for a moment, thought of extending this rigorous measure to all the convents of the city. He reflected, however, and contented himself with requiring all the monks in Valladolid to appear before him. On the appointed day they came — not all of them, but deputations from each convent — to prostrate themselves at the feet of the Emperor, who covered them with reproaches. Several times he treated them as assassins and brigands, saying that they ought all to be hanged. These poor men listened in silence and humility to the terrible language of the irritated victor, whom nothing but their patience could appease. Finally the Emperor quieted down; doubtless it had occurred to him that it was unseemly to browbeat kneeling men, not one of whom breathed a word in reply; he left the group of officers

surrounding him, and went forward into the middle of the group of monks, motioning them to quit their suppliant posture; and these good men, while obeying him, kissed the skirts of his coat and pressed around him with an eagerness which did not fail to excite some fears in the members of His Majesty's suite; for it is certain that, had there been a Dominican among these religious, nothing could have been easier than an assassination.

While the Emperor was staying at Valladolid, I had a quarrel with the grand marshal which I shall remember all my life, and in which the Emperor intervened in a very just and kindly manner in my favor. These are the circumstances:

The Duc de Frioul met me one morning in His Majesty's apartment, and asked in a very brusque tone (for he was extremely hasty) if I had had the service of the open carriage made ready. I answered with much respect, that *this service was always ready*. Three times the Duke repeated the question, raising his voice higher each time, and three times I made the same reply with the same respect. "Eh, f—," he said at last, "so you don't understand?" "That happens, apparently, Monseigneur, because Your Excellency explains himself badly." Then he spoke to me about a new carriage which had arrived from Paris that very day, and which I knew nothing about. I was about to reply to His Excellency, but without being willing to listen to me the grand marshal went out, shouting,

swearing, and apostrophizing me in terms to which I was not at all accustomed. I followed him as far as his apartment in order to have an explanation, but on reaching his door he entered it alone, and slammed it rudely in my face.

Nevertheless, I went in a few minutes later, but His Excellency had forbidden his valet de chambre to introduce me, saying that he had nothing to tell, and nothing to hear from me.

Unaccustomed to such freaks, I went, almost beside myself, into the Emperor's chamber. When His Majesty entered, I was still so moved that my face was wet with tears. His Majesty wished to know what was the matter, and I recounted the quarrel just thrust upon me by the grand marshal.

"You are a baby," said the Emperor to me; "calm yourself and have the grand marshal told that I wish to speak to him."

His Excellency lost no time in complying with the Emperor's invitation, and it was I who announced him. "See here," said the Emperor, pointing to me, "look at the state you have put this poor fellow in. What had he done to be treated like that?" The grand marshal bowed without replying, and with a rather dissatisfied air. The Emperor went on by calling his attention to the fact that he should have given me his orders more clearly, and that a man was excusable for not obeying such as are unintelligibly given. Then,

turning to me, His Majesty said: "Monsieur Constant, be sure that will never occur again."

This simple fact gives the answer to many false estimates that have been formed of the Emperor's character. Doubtless there was an immense distance between the grand marshal of the palace and a simple valet de chambre of His Majesty, and yet the marshal was reproved for a wrong done to the valet de chambre. The Emperor was profoundly impartial in the administration of his domestic justice; never was the interior of any palace better governed than his own, because there was really no master there except himself.

The grand marshal bore a grudge against me for some time, but, as I have already said, he was an excellent man; his bad humor soon evaporated, and so thoroughly that, on our return to Paris, he asked me to be his proxy at the baptismal font for a child of my father-in-law, who had asked him to be its godfather; the godmother was the Empress Josephine, who kindly selected my wife to represent her. The Duc de Frioul did things with as much nobility and grandeur as good grace. After that time — and I love to do this justice to his memory — he eagerly seized every opportunity of being useful to me, and of making me forget the chagrin his vehemence had caused me.

I fell ill at Valladolid with a rather violent fever, some days before His Majesty's departure. On the day set for it, I was at the height of my sickness,

and the Emperor, fearing lest the journey might prevent or at least retard my recovery, forbade me to be told, and set off without me, recommending the persons with whom he left me at Valladolid to be careful of my health. When they found me somewhat easy, they told me that His Majesty had departed; I was unable to contain myself longer, and in spite of all the doctor could say, of my own weakness, and everything else, I insisted on being put into a carriage, and off I started. It was well I did; for hardly had I left Valladolid two leagues behind me when I found myself better and the fever left me. I arrived in Paris five or six days after the Emperor, at the moment when His Majesty had just appointed Count de Montesquiou grand chamberlain, replacing Prince de Talleyrand, whom I met that very day, and who did not seem to me in the least affected by this disgrace; possibly he was consoled for it by the dignity of vice-grand elector, which had been conferred on him in exchange.

CHAPTER II

Arrival in Paris — The Madrid palace and the Louvre — The Château de Chambord intended for Prince de Neufchâtel — Continual labors of the Emperor — The Emperor difficult to please in music — His incorrect voice and his habit of humming — *Malbrough* the signal of departure — The Emperor's gaiety when starting on the Russian campaign — Crescentini and Madame Grassini — Crescentini's acting — Satisfaction and generosity of the Emperor — Sickness and death of Dazincourt — Ingratitude of the public — A word about Dazincourt — Sojourn of the Emperor at the Élysée — Marriage of the Duc de Castiglione — The Grand Duchess of Tuscany — Hunting at Rambouillet — The Emperor's skill — Talma — Departure of Their Majesties for Strasburg — The Emperor crosses the Rhine — The battle of Ratisbonne — The Emperor wounded — Keen alarm in the army — Firmness of the Emperor — Silence recommended to the journals — The Emperor's instructions before every battle — A Bavarian family saved by Constant — Vexation of the Emperor — M. Pfister goes mad — The Emperor's solicitude — Conspiracy against the Emperor — A million in diamonds — Outrage on a flag of truce — Moderation of the Emperor — Letter of Prince de Neufchâtel to Archduke Maximilian — Bombardment of Vienna — The life of Marie-Louise protected by the Emperor — Flight of Archduke Maximilian and taking of Vienna — Stupor of the Austrians.

THE Emperor reached Paris January 28; he spent the rest of the winter there, with the exception of a few days at Rambouillet and Saint-Cloud. On the very day of his arrival, although he must have been much fatigued by a journey almost without a

break from Valladolid, the Emperor visited the buildings of the Louvre and the rue de Rivoli. His mind was occupied by what he had seen of the palace of Madrid, and his new instructions to M. Fontaine and the other architects sufficiently proved his desire to make of the Louvre the most beautiful palace in the world. His Majesty subsequently asked for an estimate on the Château de Chambord, which he wished to give to Prince de Neufchâtel. M. Fontaine reported that it would cost 1,700,000 francs to render it inhabitable, the buildings being in a pitiable condition; it had scarcely been touched since the death of Marshal de Saxe.

His Majesty spent the two months and a half of this sojourn in cabinet business, which he seldom left, and always with regret. His amusements, as usual, were concerts and the play. He loved music passionately, above all Italian music, and, like all great amateurs, he was hard to please. He would have been glad to sing himself, if he only could, but his voice was the most incorrect that could possibly be imagined,—which did not prevent him from occasionally humming fragments of melodies that had pleased him. It was generally in the mornings that he was addicted to these little reminiscences; he used to regale me with them while I was dressing him. The air I heard him murder most frequently was the *Marseillaise*. The Emperor also whistled sometimes, but softly. The air of *Malbrough*, whistled by His Majesty, was for me a

certain announcement of a near departure for the army. I remember that he never whistled so much, and was never so gay, as when about to set out for the Russian campaign.

His Majesty's favorite singers were Crescentini and Madame Grassini. I saw Crescentini make his début at Paris in the rôle of Romeo, in *Romeo and Juliet;* he came preceded by the immense reputation of being the first singer of Italy, and he justified it completely, in spite of all the prejudices he had to overcome; for I still remember all that was said of him before he made his appearance at the court theatre. According to the so-called connoisseurs, he was a brawler, devoid of taste and method, a maker of absurd runs and variations, a cold and unintelligent actor, and a thousand objectionable things beside. He knew when he came on the stage how ill-disposed his critics were, but he did not betray the least embarrassment; his noble bearing agreeably surprised those who were expecting, on hearsay, an awkward and ill-shaped man; a flattering murmur greeted him therefore, and so electrified him that from the first act he captured all suffrages. Movements full of grace and dignity, a perfect knowledge of the stage, gestures moderate and in perfect accordance with the dialogue, a countenance on which every shade of passion depicted itself with the most surprising verity,—all these rare and precious qualities gave to the enchanting accents of this artist a magic of which it is impos-

sible to give an idea to those who have not heard him. The interest he awakened grew in intensity with every scene, but at the third act the emotion and rapture of the spectators became a frenzy. In this act, played almost entirely by Crescentini, this admirable singer communicated to the soul of his hearers all the heartbreaking pathos of a love expressed by a delightful melody, by all that sorrow and despair can grasp in sublime music. The Emperor was enraptured, and he gave Crescentini a considerable gratuity, accompanied by the most flattering tokens of the pleasure he had experienced in listening to him.

On that day, as on every occasion when they have played together since, Crescentini was admirably seconded by Madame Grassini, a woman of superior talent, and possessed of the most astonishing voice ever heard on the stage. She and Madame Barili then shared the favor of the public.

The same evening, or else on the day following Crescentini's début, the French stage met an irreparable loss in the person of Dazincourt, who died when barely sixty. The illness of which he died had begun on his return from Erfurt. It was long and painful, and yet the public, to whose pleasure this great comedian had so long contributed, never inquired for him until his illness was beyond remedy and his last agony had begun. Formerly, when an esteemed actor (and who had better merited esteem than Dazincourt?) was long absent from the stage

on account of sickness, the parterre was accustomed to manifest its regrets and make daily inquiries concerning the invalid; at the close of each performance, the actor whose business it was to make the announcements for the succeeding day would read to the assembly the bulletin of his comrade's health. It was not so for Dazincourt, and the parterre displayed ingratitude toward him.

I liked and sincerely esteemed Dazincourt, whose acquaintance I had made some years before his death; not many men have deserved better than he, or knew better how to conciliate esteem and affection. I will not speak of his talent, which rendered him the worthy successor of Préville, whose friend and pupil he was; all of his contemporaries must remember how Dazincourt played Figaro; but I will speak of the nobility of his character, his generosity, his tried integrity. His birth and education would seem to have removed him from the stage, circumstances alone impelled him thither; he was able to guard himself against the temptations of his position. Behind the scenes, amidst the intrigues of the green room, he remained a well-bred man, of pure morals. Received in the best society, which he delighted by the piquancy of his wit as well as by his good manners and urbanity, he amused people without reminding them that he was a comedian.

At the end of February His Majesty went to establish himself for a time at the Élysée palace. It was there, I think, that the contract of marriage

was signed between one of his best lieutenants, Marshal Augereau, recently made Duc de Castiglione, and the daughter of an old superior officer, Mademoiselle Bourlon de Chavanges. It was there, also, that the imperial decree was issued which gave the grand duchy of Tuscany to the Princess Eliza, with the title of grand duchess.

Toward the middle of March the Emperor spent some days at Rambouillet. There were some excellent hunts there, and in one of them His Majesty himself ran down and killed a stag near Saint Hubert's pond. There was also a ball and a concert; Crescentini, Mesdames Grassini, and Barili, and several famous virtuosos sang, and Talma recited verses.

At four o'clock in the morning of April 18, the Emperor having received tidings of a new invasion of Bavaria by the Austrians, he set out for Strasburg with the Empress, whom he left in that city. On the 15th, at eleven in the morning, he crossed the Rhine at the head of his army. The Empress did not long remain alone; the Queen of Westphalia, the Queen of Holland and her sons, the Grand Duchess of Baden and her husband soon joined her.

The splendid campaign of 1809 commenced immediately. How glorious it was everybody knows, and also that one of the least deeds by which it was distinguished was the taking of Vienna.

At the taking of Ratisbonne, April 23, the Em-

peror received a spent ball on his right foot, which gave him a rather bad contusion. I was with the attendants when some grenadiers of the guard came running up to tell me that His Majesty was wounded. I made all haste, and arrived at the moment when M. Soan was dressing it. They cut and laced the Emperor's boot, and he instantly remounted his horse; several generals urged him to rest awhile, but he replied: "My dear fellows, must I not see everything?" Nothing could exceed the enthusiasm of the soldiers on learning that their chief had been wounded but that his wound was not dangerous. "The Emperor exposes himself as we do," said they; "he is no coward!"

The journals did not mention this event. Always before giving battle, the Emperor gave instructions that in case he were wounded every possible precaution should be taken to prevent the troops from knowing it. "Who knows," said he, "what horrible confusion might be produced by such a piece of news? The destinies of a great empire hang on my life. Remember that, gentlemen, and if I am wounded let no one know it, if that be possible. If I am killed, try to win the battle without me; it will be time enough to tell it afterwards."

Fifteen days after the taking of Ratisbonne, I was far ahead of His Majesty on the road to Vienna, alone in a carriage with an officer of the household, when we suddenly heard frightful cries from a house on the side of the road. I called a halt at once;

we alighted, and on entering this house we beheld several soldiers, stragglers, such as there are in all armies, who, without disturbing themselves about the alliance between France and Bavaria, were treating most horribly a Bavarian family that occupied the house. An old grandmother, a young man, three children, and a young woman composed this family. Our embroidered coats luckily imposed on these madmen; we threatened them with the Emperor's anger, and succeeded in getting them out of the house, which we shortly afterwards quitted ourselves, covered with thanks. In the evening I told the Emperor what I had done; he approved it highly, and said: "Do what I can, there are always dastards in an army, and it is they that do the harm. A brave and good soldier would blush at such things."

In the beginning of these Memoirs I had occasion to mention a controller of the kitchen, M. Pfister, one of the most faithful servants of His Majesty, and also one of those to whom the Emperor was most attached. M. Pfister had followed him to Egypt; he had incurred danger upon danger for him. The day of the battle of Landshut, which either preceded or very closely followed the taking of Ratisbonne, this poor man went mad. He ran out of his tent, hid himself in a wood near the field of battle, and stripped himself completely of his clothes. At the end of a few hours His Majesty sent for M. Pfister; he was looked for, inquired

after, but no one could tell what had become of him. Fearing lest he might have been made prisoner, the Emperor sent an orderly to the Austrians to reclaim his kitchen controller and propose an exchange. The orderly returned, saying that the Austrians had not seen M. Pfister. Greatly disturbed, the Emperor ordered a search to be made in the environs, and it was then that the poor sick man was discovered, entirely unclothed, as I have said, crouching behind a tree, and in a frightful condition, all his body being torn with briars. They brought him back. He seemed quite tranquil; we thought him cured; he resumed his service, but shortly after our return to Paris he had a new attack. He was confided to the care of the learned Doctor Esquirol, who, notwithstanding all his talent, was unable to effect his cure. I often went to see him; he had no further attacks, but his brain was turned; he heard and understood very well; his responses, however, were those of a veritable lunatic. His attachment to the Emperor had not deserted him; he talked of him incessantly, and always believed himself on duty near him. One day he said in a mysterious way that he wished to confide to me a terrible secret, the secret of a conspiracy against His Majesty's life. At the same time he handed me a petition for His Majesty, and with it a bundle of little scraps of paper which he had scrawled upon himself, and which he took to be documentary evidence of the plot. At another time he remitted to

me, as usual for the Emperor, a handful of small pebbles, which he called diamonds of great value: "There is more than a million's worth in what I have given you there," he said to me. The Emperor, to whom I gave an account of my visits, was extremely touched by the continual preoccupation of this unfortunate, all of whose thoughts and actions bore some reference to his former master. He died without recovering his reason.

May 10, at nine o'clock in the morning, the first lines of defence of the Austrian capital were attacked and overcome by Marshal Oudinot; the faubourgs surrendered at discretion. Then the Duc de Montebello advanced upon the esplanade at the head of the division. But the garrison, having closed the gates, fired a terrible discharge from the top of the ramparts; fortunately, it killed very few people. The Duc de Montebello summoned the garrison to surrender, and the Archduke Maximilian responded that he would defend Vienna to his last breath. This reply was carried to the Emperor.

After holding a council with his generals, His Majesty charged Colonel Lagrange to summon the Archduke again, and the unlucky colonel had scarcely entered the city when he fell beneath the blows of the enraged populace. General O'Reilly saved his life by causing him to be picked up by his soldiers; but the Archduke Maximilian, in order to insult the Emperor still further, had the person who struck the first blow at the French flag of truce

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marched about in triumph in the midst of the National Guard. This attack, which had revolted even some of the Viennese themselves, did not alter His Majesty's intention; he meant to push moderation and deference as far as they would go, and Prince de Neufchâtel wrote, by his orders, to the Archduke the following letter, a copy of which chanced to fall into my hands:

"Prince de Neufchâtel to His Highness, the Archduke Maximilian, commanding the city of Vienna.

"His Majesty, the Emperor and King, wishes to spare this large and interesting population the calamities which menace it, and he charges me to represent to Your Highness that, if you persist in wishing to defend the place, you will cause the destruction of one of the most beautiful cities of Europe. In every country to which war has conducted him, my sovereign has made known his anxiety to avert the disasters it entails upon unarmed populations. Your Highness must be convinced that His Majesty is sensibly affected in beholding at the brink of ruin this city, which he is proud of having saved already. Nevertheless, contrary to the established usage in fortresses, Your Highness has fired cannon from the city side, when this discharge might kill, not an enemy of your sovereign, but the wife or child of his most zealous adherents. If Your Highness remain determined to defend the place, His Majesty will be forced to

begin the assault, and the ruin of this immense capital will be consummated in thirty-six hours by the fire of howitzers and the bombs from our batteries, as the exterior city will be destroyed by the effect of yours. His Majesty is confident that these considerations will induce Your Highness to abandon a determination which will merely retard by some instants the taking of the place. In a word, if Your Highness does not decide upon a step which will save the city, its population, plunged by your fault into such frightful calamities, will be changed from faithful subjects into enemies of your family."

This letter did not prevent the Archduke from persisting in his project of defence. This obstinacy wearied the Emperor, and he finally gave orders to establish two batteries. An hour later bombs and bullets were raining into the city. The inhabitants, with true German coolness, came up on the glacis to observe the effect of the two fires of attack and defence; they seemed much more interested than alarmed by the spectacle. Several cannon balls had already fallen into the court of the imperial palace when a trumpeter came out of the city to announce that the Archduchess Marie-Louise had not been able to follow her father, but lay sick in the palace and exposed to all dangers from the artillery. The Emperor immediately gave orders to have the direction of the pieces changed, so that the bombs and cannon balls would pass over the palace. The Archduke did not hold out long before this brisk

and energetic attack; he took to flight and abandoned Vienna to the victors.

The Emperor made his entry into Vienna on May 12, a month after the occupation of Munich by the Austrians. This circumstance made a vivid impression, and contributed greatly to propagate the superstitious ideas entertained by many soldiers concerning their chief. "Do you see!" said they; "all he needed was time to get here! That man must be a god!" "A devil, you mean," said the Austrians, whose stupefaction it is impossible to describe. It reached such a point that many allowed themselves to be taken with arms in their hands, without offering the least resistance, or even trying to escape, so convinced were they that the Emperor and the grenadiers of the guard were not men, and that sooner or later they must fall into the power of these supernatural enemies.

CHAPTER III

The Emperor at Schönbrunn — Description of this residence — Apartments of the Emperor — Inconveniences of stoves — Maria-Theresa's flying chair — The parks of Versailles, Malmaison, and Schönbrunn — The *Gloriette* — The ruins — The menagerie and the kiosk of Maria-Theresa — Reviews held by the Emperor — The manner in which the Emperor made promotions — Rewards granted by the Emperor — An heroic deed — Kindliness of the Emperor — Examining knapsacks, account-books, and weapons — Unexpected orders — Good grace of a young officer — The Emperor examines a military wagon.

THE Emperor did not remain in Vienna; he established his headquarters at the castle of Schönbrunn, an imperial residence some half a league from the city. The ground in front of the castle was arranged for the encampment of the guard. The castle of Schönbrunn, built by the Empress Maria-Theresa in 1754, in an admirable position, is irregular and very defective in point of architecture, but full of majesty. To reach it you cross a bridge thrown across the little Vienna River: four sphynxes in stone ornament this bridge, which is very large and agreeable in construction. Opposite the bridge is a fine gate leading into a large court, vast enough to permit the manœuvring of seven or eight thousand men. It is square, sur-

rounded by covered galleries, and adorned with two large fountains with marble statues. On either side of the gate is a large obelisk in red stone, surmounted by eagles of gilded lead.

In German Schönbrunn signifies *beautiful fountain*. This name is derived from a fresh and limpid spring found in a grove of the park; it gushes from a little eminence around which has been constructed a small pavilion, very prettily sculptured on the interior so as to imitate stalactites. Within is a recumbent naiad holding a horn, through which the water issues and falls into a marble reservoir. It is a delightful little spot in summer time.

One can but praise the interior of the palace: it is richly furnished in an original and distinguished style. The Emperor's sleeping-chamber, the only room in the building in which there was a chimney, was wainscoted in Chinese lacquer, very old, but still astonishingly fresh in its painting and gilding; the study was decorated in the same manner; all the rooms, this one excepted, were heated in winter by immense stoves, which singularly detracted from the effect of the architecture. Between the study and the Emperor's bedroom was a very curious machine called *the flying chair*, a sort of mechanical cabin which had been constructed for the Empress Maria-Theresa, and served to transport her from one floor to another, so that she was not obliged to go up and down the stairs like everybody else. This machine was worked by the same methods employed

for those of the theatre; that is, by ropes, pulleys, and counterweights.

The fine plantation which serves as park and garden to the palace of Schönbrunn is not as large as it should be for an imperial residence, but it would be impossible to find one more charming or better arranged. The park of Versailles is more majestic, more grandiose, but it has not the picturesqueness, the irregularity, the fantastic and unexpected effects of the park of Schönbrunn; Malmaison might more readily be compared with it. In front of the interior façade of the palace was a magnificent parterre, at the end of which was a large reservoir adorned by a group of statues representing the triumph of Neptune. This group is very fine; the French amateurs (and every one wishes to be considered a connoisseur) maintained that the women were Austrian rather than Greek; they missed the slenderness and suavity of antique forms; for my part, I confess these statues seemed to me very remarkable.

At the end of the large avenue, and bounding the horizon, rises a hill which dominates the park. It is surmounted by a very pretty building called the Gloriette; it is a circular gallery, glazed, and supported by a charming colonnade, with trophies in the intervals. When coming by the road from Vienna you catch sight, on entering the avenue, of the Gloriette, above, and as it were blended with the palace; this view produces a very good effect.

What the Austrians admire in the park of Schönbrunn is a grove in which are what they call *the ruins*. A reservoir, with a gushing fountain which supplies several small cascades, the remains of an aqueduct and a temple, fallen vases, statues without heads, legs, and arms, — these members being scattered in all directions, — broken columns half-embedded in earth, upright ones supporting fragments of a pediment or entablature, — all this unites to form a fine disorder and resembles a veritable antique ruin when viewed from a little distance. But seen close by it is quite another thing; the hand of the contemporary sculptor is visible; all these fragments are plainly of one sort of stone; and the weeds pushing through the crevices of the columns show for what they are, namely, stone painted to imitate verdure.

But if the works of art scattered in the park of Schönbrunn are not all irreproachable, those of nature abundantly make up for this. What beautiful trees! what thick hornbeams! what deep and refreshing shades! The alleys, prodigiously high and wide, were planted with trees that united overhead and were impenetrable to sunlight; the eye lost itself in the windings of other smaller alleys where each step revealed some agreeable surprise. At the end of the longest was the menagerie, one of the largest and most diversified in Europe. It is very ingenious in construction, and might serve as a model; it is shaped like a

star, in the centre of which there is a very elegant little kiosque, placed there by the Empress Maria-Theresa as a resting-place. From this kiosque the whole menagerie is visible.

Each of the rays of this star forms a private garden, in which range elephants, buffaloes, camels, dromedaries, deer, kangaroos; or where tigers, bears, leopards, lions, hyenas, etc., are enclosed in fine and solid cages. Swans and rare aquatic fowls swim in ponds surrounded by railings. I specially remarked in this menagerie a very extraordinary animal which His Majesty had intended to send to France, but it died the day before it was to depart. It came from Poland and was called *curus;* it was a sort of ox, much larger than the ordinary one, with a mane like a lion's, and horns rather short and somewhat curved, but enormously thick at the base.

The drums beat every morning at six o'clock; two or three hours later the troops ordered for the parade were assembled in the court of honor. At ten o'clock precisely the Emperor came down the front steps and placed himself in the midst of his generals.

It is impossible to form an idea of these parades, which did not in the least resemble the parades of honor in Paris. In holding these reviews the Emperor descended to the least details; he examined the soldiers one by one, so to say; he looked into the eyes of every one to see whether he were

feeling pain or pleasure in his head; he questioned the officers and sometimes even the soldiers. It was usually there that His Majesty made his promotions. He would sometimes ask a colonel who was the bravest officer of his regiment; the response was always prompt, always frank: the Emperor knew this well. When the colonel had spoken, His Majesty would address himself to all the officers in general. "Which is the bravest one among you?" "Sire, it is such a one." The two replies were nearly always alike. "Then," the Emperor would say, "I make him a baron, and I reward in him not merely his personal valor, but that of the corps to which he belongs. He does not owe this favor to me alone, but also to the esteem of his comrades." It was the same with respect to the soldiers. Those most distinguished for courage or good conduct rose in grade or received gratuities, or even pensions. The Emperor granted one of twelve hundred francs to a soldier making his first campaign, who had crossed an enemy's squadron carrying his wounded general on his shoulder, and defending him as he would have done his father.

In these reviews the Emperor was seen to look into the soldiers' knapsacks, to examine their account-books, and to take a musket from the hands of a frail young man, who looked pale and suffering, and say to him in a benevolent tone: "It is very heavy!" He often commanded the

exercise; when he did not, it was either General Dorsenne, General Curial, or General Mouton. Sometimes he took whims. One morning, for example, when a regiment of the confederation was to be reviewed, His Majesty turned toward the orderly officers, and addressing Prince de Salm, said to him: "M. de Salm, these men ought to know you; come here, order them to charge in twelve time." The young prince blushed a good deal, but did not seem disconcerted; he bowed, drew his sword as gracefully as possible, and did what the Emperor desired with an ease and precision which delighted him. Another day, the pontoon men were marching with about forty vehicles. The Emperor cried: *Halt!* and, pointing out an ammunition wagon to General Bertrand, told him to call up one of his officers. "What is there in that wagon?" "Sire, some bolts, sacks of nails, ropes, hatchets, saws. . . ." — "How many of all that?" The officer gave the exact number. His Majesty, to verify the report, had the wagon emptied, counted the pieces, found the numbers tally, and to assure himself that nothing had been left in the wagon, he climbed into it over the wheel, making use of the spokes. There was a movement of approbation and shouts of joy in all the ranks. "Bravo!" said they; "that is right! That is the way not to be deceived." All these things caused the Emperor to be adored by his soldiers.

CHAPTER IV

Attempt against Napoleon's life — Fortunate penetration of General Rapp — The arrest of Frederick Stabs — The fanatical student — Incredible perseverance — The Duc de Rovigo in the Emperor's apartments — Stabs interrogated by the Emperor — Pardon twice offered and refused — His Majesty's emotion — Condemnation of Stabs — A four days' fast — Last words of Stabs.

IT was at one of these reviews of which I have just spoken, and which usually attracted a crowd of sightseers from Vienna and its suburbs, that the Emperor narrowly escaped assassination. It was the 13th of October. His Majesty had just alighted from his horse, and was crossing the court with Prince de Neufchâtel and General Rapp beside him, when a rather good-looking young man pushed rudely through the crowd and asked in bad French if he might speak to the Emperor. His Majesty received him kindly, but not comprehending his language very well, he asked General Rapp to find out what he wanted. The General asked him several questions, but seeming to be dissatisfied with his replies, he ordered the officer of gendarmes who was on duty to send him away. A non-commissioned officer led the young man outside

of the circle formed by the staff and thrust him back into the crowd. Nothing more was thought about him until the Emperor, turning around suddenly, found the pretended solicitor approaching him again, with his right hand at his breast, as if to take a petition from the pocket of his coat. General Rapp seized the young man by the arms, saying: "Sir, you have been sent to me already. What do you want?" He was about to retire again when the General, thinking he looked suspicious, ordered the officer of gendarmerie to arrest him. The latter signalled his men to seize the unknown. One of them, taking him by the collar, shook him rather roughly, and his coat being half-unbuttoned, another gendarme saw something that looked like a bundle of papers fall out of it; it was a large kitchen knife, with several sheets of gray paper wrapped round it by way of a sheath. Then the gendarmes led him to General Savary.

This youth was a student, the son of a Protestant minister of Naumburg; he called himself Frederick Stabs, and may have been eighteen or nineteen years old. His face was pale and his features effeminate. He did not for an instant deny that it had been his intention to kill the Emperor. On the contrary, he boasted of it, and greatly regretted that circumstances had prevented the accomplishment of his design.

He had left his father's house with a horse which the need of money had obliged him to sell

while on the road. None of his relatives or friends had any knowledge of his project. The day after leaving home, he had written to his father that he need not be disturbed about either him or his horse; that he had long promised some one to make a journey to Vienna, and that his family would soon hear him talked of in a way that would make them proud. He had been in Vienna only two days; occupying himself in the first place with finding out what he could about His Majesty's habits, and knowing that he held a review every morning in the court of the castle, he had come there once to learn the localities. The next day he meant to strike his blow, and was arrested.

The Duc de Rovigo, after interrogating Stabs, came to the Emperor, who had returned to his apartments. At first he shrugged his shoulders, but on seeing the knife which had been taken from Stabs, he said: "Ah! ah! bring this young man here; I shall be very glad to speak with him." The Duke went out, and returned in a few minutes with Stabs. When the latter entered, the Emperor made a gesture of pity, and said to Prince de Neufchâtel: "But, really, this is a child!" An interpreter was summoned and the interrogatory began.

In the first place His Majesty had the assassin asked if he had ever seen him anywhere else. "Yes, I saw you at Erfurt, last year," replied Stabs. "It seems that you think nothing of a crime. Why did you wish to kill me?" "It is

not a crime to kill you; on the contrary, it is a duty for every good German. I wanted to kill you because you are the oppressor of Germany." —"It was not I who began the war." "It was you!"—"Whose portrait is this?" (The Emperor was holding the picture of a woman that had been found on Stabs.) "It is that of my best friend, the adopted daughter of my father."—"How! and you are an assassin? Are you not afraid of afflicting and ruining the beings who are dear to you?" "I wished to do my duty; nothing ought to prevent me."—"But how did you mean to set about stabbing me?" "I would have asked you if we were soon to have peace, and if you had said no I would have poniarded you."—"He is mad," said the Emperor; "he is decidedly mad! And how could you hope to escape if you struck me like that in the midst of my soldiers?" "I knew very well to what I was exposing myself, and I am even astonished that I am living still." This assurance affected the Emperor keenly; he kept silence for some moments and looked fixedly at Stabs, who remained impassible under this glance. . . . Then the Emperor continued: "She whom you love will be much afflicted." "Oh! she will be afflicted, doubtless, but it will be because I have not succeeded; for she hates you at least as much as I do."—"Supposing I pardon you?" "You would make a mistake, for I should try again to kill you." The Emperor sent for

M. Corvisart, saying: "This young man is either sick or mad; it cannot be otherwise." "I am neither one nor the other," the assassin replied quickly. M. Corvisart was in the apartments; he came and felt Stabs' pulse. "The gentleman is well," said he. "I told you so," said Stabs, triumphantly. "Well, Doctor," said His Majesty, "this young man, who is in such good health, has come a hundred leagues to assassinate me."

In spite of the doctor's assurance and the avowals of Stabs, the Emperor, moved by the coolness and assurance of this wretch, again offered to pardon him, requiring of him, as the sole condition, an avowal of some repentance for his crime; but Stabs affirmed again that he regretted nothing but his ill-success. Then the Emperor abandoned him.

Led back to prison, he persisted in his avowals, and was soon brought before a military commission and condemned. He was not executed until the 17th, and from the 13th, the day of his arrest, he took no nourishment, saying that he would have strength enough to go to his death. The Emperor had ordered the execution to be delayed as long as possible, in the hope that sooner or later he would repent; but he remained unshaken. While they were taking him to the place where he was to be shot, overhearing some one say that peace had just been signed, he cried out, in a loud voice: *Long live liberty! Long live Germany!* These were his last words.

CHAPTER V

Gallant adventures of the Emperor at Schönbrunn — Promenade on the Prater — Exclamation of a young German widow — Courtesy of the Emperor — Rapid conquest — Madame —— follows the Emperor to Bavaria — Her death in Paris — The young enthusiast — Propositions listened to with eagerness — Astonishment of the Emperor — Innocence respected — The young girl dowried by the Emperor — The Emperor's supper — Roustan's gluttony — A request indiscreetly granted — Constant's embarrassment — The trick discovered — The Emperor supping on what Roustan had left.

DURING his sojourn at Schönbrunn, gallant adventures were not lacking to the Emperor. One day when he had come to Vienna and was riding in the Prater with a very limited suite (the *Prater* is a superb promenade in the Leopold faubourg), a young German, the widow of a very rich merchant, perceived him and exclaimed involuntarily, to some ladies walking with her, "*'Tis he!*" This exclamation was heard by His Majesty, who stopped short and saluted the ladies, smiling. She who had spoken became as red as fire; the Emperor recognized her by this unequivocal sign, and looked at her for a long time, afterwards resuming his promenade.

For sovereigns there is neither long waiting nor great difficulties. This new conquest of His Majesty was not less rapid than the others. In order not to be separated from her illustrious lover, Madame —— followed him to Bavaria, and afterwards came to live in Paris, where she died in 1812.

Another day, His Majesty had occasion to remark a charming young person: it was one morning, in the environs of Schönbrunn. Some one was commissioned to see this damsel and ask her to meet the Emperor in the castle the next evening. Chance worked marvels for His Majesty on this occasion. The splendor of so illustrious a name, and the renown of his victories, had produced a profound impression on the young girl's mind, and disposed her to listen favorably to the proposition made her. She eagerly consented to come to the castle. At the appointed hour, the person of whom I have spoken went to fetch her. I received her when she came, and introduced her into His Majesty's chamber. She did not speak French, but she knew Italian perfectly, and consequently it was easy for the Emperor to talk with her. He learned, to his amazement, that this charming damsel belonged to a very honorable Viennese family, and that in coming to see him she had no thought but that of expressing to him her admiration. The Emperor respected the innocence of the young girl; he sent her back home to her parents,

and gave orders that pains should be taken to marry her well, a thing he made easier and finer by means of a considerable dowry.

At Schönbrunn, as at Paris, the Emperor ordinarily dined at six o'clock. But as he sometimes worked until far into the night, we always took care to provide a light supper, which was locked up in a small osier hamper covered with canvas. This had two keys, one of which was kept by the chief of the kitchen and the other by me. The care of this hamper was a thing that concerned nobody but me, and as His Majesty was extraordinarily temperate, he seldom asked for supper. One evening Roustan, who had been riding at full speed all day in his master's service, was in a little salon adjoining the Emperor's chamber; he saw me as I came in from assisting His Majesty to bed, and looking at the hamper with wistful eyes he said in his bad French: "Me would like very much to eat a chicken wing; me very hungry." I refused at first; but finally, knowing that the Emperor had gone to bed, and seeing no likelihood of his asking for supper that evening, I let Roustan do as he chose. Very well content, he began by taking a second joint, then a wing, and I am not sure that anything would have been left of the fowl if I had not suddenly heard the bell ringing sharply. I entered the chamber, and was frightened to hear the Emperor say to me: "Constant, my chicken?" My embarrassment can be imag-

ined: I had but one, and how could I procure another at such an hour! At last I decided what to do, and thinking that it was my business to carve the fowl, and that I would thus have every facility for concealing the absence of the two members which Roustan had eaten, I went in boldly with the chicken turned over on the dish. Roustan followed me, because, if there were any scolding to be endured, I was glad enough to have him share it with me. I severed the remaining wing and presented it to the Emperor. The Emperor refused it! . . . saying: "Give me the chicken, I will choose for myself." This time there was no way of escape: the dismembered chicken must be seen by His Majesty. "Hold on," said he; "how long is it since chickens have had only one leg and one wing? This is fine: it seems I must eat the leavings of others. Who was it, then, that ate the half of my supper?" I looked at Roustan, who in great confusion responded: "Me was hungry, Sire; me ate the leg and the wing." "How, you rogue! it was you? Ah! how I shall scold you for it!" And without another word the Emperor ate the remaining leg and wing.

The next day at his toilet he summoned the grand marshal for some communication, and during the conversation he said to him: "Guess what I ate for my supper last night? . . . the leavings of M. Roustan. Yes, that rascal took the notion to eat half of my chicken." Just then Roustan came

in. "Come here, you rogue!" continued the Emperor, "and the first time that happens again be sure you will pay me for it." And while saying this he pulled him by the ears, and laughed heartily.

CHAPTER VI

The battle of Essling — Rudeness of two of the Emperor's friends — The Duc de Montebello's aversion for the Duc de —— — Bluntness of the Duc de Montebello — His rancor concerning the plague-stricken of Jaffa — Presentiments of Marshal Lannes — Fatal mishap — Marshal Lannes struck by a bullet — The Emperor's grief — The Emperor on his knees beside the Marshal — Heroic courage of Marshal Lannes — His death possibly caused by a fast of twenty-four hours — Affliction of the Emperor — Tears of the old grenadiers — Last words of the Marshal — Embalmment of the body — Horrible spectacle — Courage of the army surgeons — Grief of Madame the Duchesse de Montebello — Levity of the Emperor — The Duchesse de Montebello wishes to leave the service of the Empress.

MAY 22, ten days after the Emperor's triumphant entry into the Austrian capital, the battle of Essling was fought, a bloody battle which lasted from four o'clock in the morning until six o'clock in the evening, a battle sadly memorable for all the old soldiers of the Empire, because it cost the life of perhaps the bravest of them all, — the Duc de Montebello, so loyal a friend to the Emperor, and the only one who shared with Marshal Augereau the right to say everything frankly to his face.

On the eve of the battle, the Marshal entered the apartments of His Majesty, whom he found surrounded by several persons. The Duc de ——

which fractured his right hip and the patella of the left knee.

He thought at first that he had only a few minutes to live, and caused himself to be carried on a stretcher to the Emperor, saying that he wished to embrace him before he died. The Emperor, seeing him thus bathed in his own blood, had the stretcher put down, and throwing himself on his knees, he took the Marshal in his arms and said to him, weeping: "Lannes, do you recognize me?" "Yes, Sire; . . . you are losing your best friend." — "No! no! you will live! Is it not true, M. Larrey, that you answer for his life?" Some of the wounded, hearing His Majesty speak thus, tried to rise on their elbows, and began shouting: *Long live the Emperor!*

The surgeons transported the Marshal to a little village on the river bank, called Ebersdorf, near the battle-field. Here they found, in the house of a brewer, a room over a stable, in which the stifling heat made still more insupportable the odor of the corpses by which the house was surrounded. . . . But there was nothing better to be had; it was necessary to put up with it. The Marshal underwent the amputation of his thigh with heroic courage, but the fever that set in afterwards was so violent that, fearing lest he might die under the knife, the surgeons deferred cutting off the other leg. This fever was partly the result of exhaustion; when he was wounded the Marshal had eaten nothing for twenty-

four hours. At last MM. Larrey, Yvan, Paulet, and Lannefranque decided on the second amputation, and when it was over the tranquillity of the wounded man gave some hopes of saving him. But it was not to be. The fever increased and took a most alarming character, and in spite of all that could be done by these skilful surgeons and Doctor Frank, then the most celebrated physician in Europe, the Marshal breathed his last on the 31st of May, at five o'clock in the morning. He was barely forty years old.

During these eight days of agony (for the sufferings he experienced might be called by that name) the Emperor went to see him very often; he always came away in despair. I also went to see the Marshal every day, by the Emperor's desire; I admired the patience with which he supported his pain, and yet he had no hope; for he felt himself dying, and all faces told him of it. What a touching and terrible sight to see around his house, his door, and within his chamber, those old grenadiers of the guard, always impassible until then, weeping and sobbing like children! What an atrocious thing war seems in such moments as these!

The day before he died the Marshal said to me: "I see very well, my dear Constant, that I am going to die; I desire that your master may always have near him men as loyal as I have been; tell the Emperor that I wish to see him." I was about to start when the Emperor came in. Then there was

a great silence; everybody left the room; but the door of the chamber remained ajar, and we could catch a part of the conversation. It was long and painful; the Marshal recalled his services to the Emperor, and ended with these words, uttered in a voice that was still loud and firm: "It is not to interest thee in my family that I speak to thee like this; I do not need to recommend my wife and children to thee; since I die for thee thy glory commands thee to protect them, and I am not afraid, in uttering these last reproaches of friendship, that I shall change thy dispositions toward them. Thou hast just committed a great fault, and although it will deprive thee of thy best friend, it will not correct thee; thy ambition is insatiable; it will ruin thee; thou sacrificest the men who serve thee best without consideration or necessity, and when they die thou dost not regret them. Thou hast none but flatterers around thee; I do not see one friend who dares to tell thee the truth. They will betray thee, they will abandon thee; make haste to end this war; it is the universal wish. Thou wilt never be more powerful; but thou mayst be much more loved. Pardon these verities from a dying man . . . he loves thee. . . ."

As he ended the Marshal offered his hand to the Emperor, who embraced him weeping and without a word.

The day the Marshal died his body was handed over to M. Larrey and M. Cadet de Gassicourt,

physician in ordinary to the Emperor, with orders to prepare it as they had done that of Colonel Morland, when he was killed at the battle of Austerlitz. For this purpose the corpse was transferred to Schönbrunn and deposited in the left wing of the castle, far enough from the inhabited apartments. In a few hours it was necessary to plunge the mutilated body into a bath-tub filled with a strong solution of corrosive sublimate. This extremely dangerous operation was long and difficult. M. Cadet de Gassicourt deserves praise for the courage he displayed on this occasion; for, in spite of all precautions, and the perfumes that were burned in the chamber, this distinguished chemist was seriously indisposed.

I was one of several persons who felt a mournful curiosity to behold the body of the Marshal in this condition. It was frightful. The trunk, which was steeping in the solution, was swollen in a prodigious manner, while the head, on the contrary, which had remained outside of the bath-tub, had shrunken singularly. The muscles of the face had contracted in the most hideous manner, the wide-open eyes were starting from their sockets.

After the body had remained for eight days in the corrosive sublimate, it was put in a cask made expressly for the purpose and filled with the same liquid; it was in this cask that it made the transit from Schönbrunn to Strasburg. In the latter city it was drawn from this strange coffin, and entombed

in the Egyptian fashion; that is to say, swathed in bandages and with the face uncovered. M. Larrey and M. de Gassicourt confided this honorable duty to M. Fortin, a young senior-physician who, in 1807, by his courage and indefatigable perseverance, had saved from certain death nine hundred deserted invalids, left without physicians or surgeons in a hospital near Dantzic, nearly all of whom were attacked by an epidemic malady.

In March, 1810 (what follows is an extract from a letter written by M. Fortin to his master and friend, M. Cadet de Gassicourt), Madame the Duchesse de Montebello, when passing through Strasburg in the suite of the Empress Marie-Louise, wished to see once more the husband she had so much loved.

"Thanks to your cares and those of M. de Larrey," writes M. Fortin, "the embalmment of the Marshal has succeeded perfectly. When I withdrew the body from the cask, I found it in a state of perfect preservation. In a lower room of the city hall I arranged a netting, on which I dried it by means of a stove, the heat of which was regulated. I had a very beautiful coffin made of hard wood, well smeared with wax, and now the Marshal, surrounded with bandages, and the face exposed, is deposited in his open coffin, near that of General Saint-Hilaire, in an underground room of which I have the key. A sentinel is on duty there by day and night. M. Wangen de Gueroldseck,

mayor of Strasburg, has given me every facility demanded by my functions.

"Everything was in this condition when, an hour after the arrival of Her Majesty the Empress, Madame the Duchesse de Montebello, who accompanies her as a lady of honor, sent her cousin, M. Crétu, to whose house she had gone to pay a visit, to find me. I obeyed her summons. Madame la Maréchale asked several questions and complimented me on the honorable mission entrusted to me, and then expressed, trembling, her desire to see for the last time the body of her husband. For several moments I hesitated to reply, and, foreseeing the effect which the sad spectacle would produce upon her, I finally said that the orders I had received were contrary to what she wished; but she insisted, in so pressing a manner, that at last I yielded to her entreaties. We agreed (as much to avoid compromising me as to prevent her from being recognized) that I would go for her at midnight, and that she should be accompanied by one of her relatives.

"I went to her house at the hour appointed. As soon as she saw me she rose and said she was ready to follow me. I permitted myself to detain her for a moment, entreating her to consult her own strength; I warned her of the state in which she would find the Marshal, and begged her to reflect on the impression she would receive from the gloomy places she was about to visit. She

beautiful bust of the Marshal, in unglazed porcelain, rarely executed, stopped, and without noticing the pallor which overspread the face of the Duchess, asked her how she liked the bust, and whether she thought it a good resemblance. The widow felt her wound reopen: she could not answer, and turned away in tears. It was several days before she reappeared at court. Aside from this unexpected question which had renewed her griefs, the inconceivable thoughtlessness manifested by the Emperor in putting it had wounded her so profoundly that her friends had all the trouble in the world to induce her to resume her attendance on the Empress.

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CHAPTER VII

Disasters of the battle of Essling — Murmurs of the soldiers — Apostrophes to the generals — Courageous patience — Intrepidity of Marshal Masséna — Continual luck — Zeal of the army surgeons — What the Emperor called them — M. Larrey — Horse soup — Soup made in the cuirasses — Constancy of the wounded — Suicide of a cannoneer — The old German concierge — Princesse de Lichtenstein — General Dorsenne — Good cheer and dirty linen — Outrageous letter to the Princesse de Lichtenstein — The Emperor furious — Filial piety of the Emperor — Indulgence of the Princesse de Lichtenstein — Pardon granted by the Emperor — Remonstrances of M. Larrey — Two anecdotes of this celebrated surgeon.

THE battle of Essling was disastrous in every way. Twelve thousand Frenchmen were killed. The cause of all this evil came from the breaking of the bridges, which might have been foreseen, it appears to me; for the same thing had happened two or three days before the battle. The soldiers complained openly; several corps of infantry shouted to the generals to get off their horses and fight in the midst of them. But this bad humor detracted nothing from their courage and their patience; one saw regiments remain five hours, weapons in hand, exposed to the most terrible fire. Three times during the evening the Emperor sent to ask Marshal Masséna if he could

answered that she was well prepared, that she felt all the courage necessary, and that she hoped to receive in this last visit some alleviation of the bitter regrets that she experienced. In speaking thus, her beautiful and melancholy face was calm and thoughtful. We started. M. Crétu gave his arm to his cousin; the carriage of the Duchess followed at a distance and empty; two domestics walked behind us.

"The city was illuminated; the worthy inhabitants were in holiday attire; in many houses joyous music was exciting them to celebrate this memorable day. What a contrast between these outbursts of frank mirth and our position! At times I saw the Duchess slacken her pace, shudder, and sigh; my own heart was heavy and my mind confused.

"At last we reached the town hall; Madame de Montebello directed her servants to wait for her; she went slowly down to the underground room with her cousin and me. A lantern shed a little glimmer of light; the Duchess trembled and affected a sort of assurance; but when she entered a sort of cellar, the deathlike silence which reigned beneath this subterranean vault, the lugubrious light which illumined it, the aspect of the corpse extended in his coffin, produced a frightful effect upon the Maréchale; she uttered a doleful cry and fainted. I had foreseen this accident. My whole attention was fixed upon her, and as soon as I perceived her weakness I supported her in my arms

and made her sit down. I had provided myself with everything necessary to assist her; I gave her the attentions demanded by her position. After a few moments she regained consciousness; we advised her to withdraw; she refused, rose, approached the coffin, and walked round it in silence, then pausing and letting fall her clasped hands, she remained for some time motionless, gazing at the inanimate countenance of her husband, and, watering it with her tears, she came out of this state by saying, in a voice stifled by sobs: 'My God! O my God! how changed he is!' I signified to M. Crétu that it was time for us to go, but we could only get the Duchess away by promising to bring her back the next day, — a promise which was not to be performed. I promptly closed the door; I offered my arm to Madame la Maréchale; she willingly accepted it, and when we had left the city hall I took leave of her; but she required me to enter her carriage, and gave orders to have me taken home first. During this short passage she shed a torrent of tears, and when the carriage stopped she said to me with inexpressible kindness: 'I shall never forget, sir, the important service you have just rendered me.'"

A long time afterwards the Emperor and the Empress Marie-Louise were visiting together the porcelain manufactory of Sèvres; the Duchesse de Montebello accompanied the Empress in the capacity of lady of honor. The Emperor, perceiving a

twenty steps when the cannoneer cried out: "Don't go so fast, my comrades, I shall arrive sooner than you. Long live France!" And, making an effort, he let himself roll into the Danube.

The conduct of a surgeon-major of the guards some time afterwards came very near compromising the entire corps in His Majesty's esteem. This surgeon, M. M——, lodged with General Dorsenne and several superior officers in a very delightful pleasure house belonging to Madame the Princesse de Lichtenstein. The concierge, an old German, rough and capricious, was very reluctant to serve them, and played them all the ill-turns he could. It was in vain, for example, that they asked for linen for the beds or the table; he pretended not to understand them.

General Dorsenne wrote to the Princess to complain; she doubtless gave her orders in consequence, but the General's letter remained unanswered. Several days passed; the napkins had not been changed for a month when the General took the notion of giving a grand supper. The wines of Hungary and the Rhine were gulped down; punch followed. The host was greatly complimented, but with these compliments were mingled some energetic complaints of the doubtful whiteness of the table-cloth and napkins. General Dorsenne alleged in excuse the ill-humor and sordid economy of the concierge, well-supported by the deficient courtesy of the Princess. "That must not be endured!"

cried the joyous guests in chorus; "a hostess who despises us to that extent must be called to order. Come on, M——, take some paper and a pen; write her some stinging epigrams; we must teach this Princess of Germany how to behave. French officers, victors, lying between dirty sheets and eating off of a filthy table-cloth! it is infamous." M. M—— was the too-faithful interpreter of the unanimous sentiments of these gentlemen. Heated as he was by the fumes of Hungarian wine, he wrote to the Princesse de Lichtenstein such a letter as one would not dare to write to the lowest of public women, even in carnival time. How describe what Madame de Lichtenstein felt on reading this epistle, this assemblage of all that the language of the guard-room could furnish of what is vile? It required the testimony of a third person to make her believe that the signature, *M——, Surgeon-Major of the French imperial guard*, had not been counterfeited by some miserable drunkard. In profound indignation, the Princess hastened to the house of General Andréossy, governor of Vienna for His Majesty; she showed him this letter and demanded vengeance. The General, still more irritated than she, got into a carriage and went to Schönbrunn, where he arrived during the parade. He handed the Emperor the fatal epistle: the Emperor read it; he drew back a step or two, his cheeks reddening with anger, his expression altered, and in a frightful voice he told the grand marshal

to summon M. M——. Everybody trembled. "Is it you who wrote this letter?" "Sire . . ."— "Answer, I tell you. Is it you?" "Yes, Sire, in a moment of forgetfulness, after a supper . . ." —"Wretch!" shouted His Majesty, in a way fit to terrify all who heard it, "you deserve to be shot on the spot! To insult a woman in this cowardly way! and an old woman too! Have you no mother? I respect and honor every old woman, because she reminds me of my mother." "Sire, I am culpable . . . I confess it, but my repentance is great. Deign to think of my services; I have made eighteen campaigns. . . . I am the father of a family." This last remark increased His Majesty's anger: "Arrest him; tear off his decoration; he is unworthy to wear it. . . . Let him be tried within twenty-four hours. . . ." Then turning to the generals, silent with stupefaction: "See here, gentlemen, read this! See how this blackguard treats a princess, at the very moment when her husband is negotiating a peace with me."

The parade went fast that day; when it was over General Dorsenne and M. Larrey ran to the house of Madame de Lichtenstein; they described to her the scene that had just occurred, and made the most affecting excuses to her in the name of the imperial guard; they implored her to intercede for an unhappy wretch, very guilty doubtless, but who was not in his right mind when he wrote. "He re-

pents, Madame," said the good M. Larrey, "he laments his fault; he awaits his punishment with courage, and as a just reparation for his outrage against you. . . . But he is one of the best officers in the army; he is esteemed and cherished; he has saved the lives of thousands of persons, and his distinguished talents are the only fortune of his family. . . . What will become of them if he has to die?" "To die!" cried the Princess, "to die! Good God! are things to go so far as that?" General Dorsenne went on to describe to her the resentment of the Emperor, as a million times keener than his own, and the Princess, deeply affected, wrote a letter to the Emperor, in which, professing herself satisfied and grateful for the reparation she had obtained, she entreated him to pardon M. M——. His Majesty read this letter and did not answer it. Again they visited the Princess who, this time, became extremely alarmed, and said that she was truly distressed at having shown M. M——'s letter to the General. Determined to do all in her power to obtain the surgeon's pardon, she addressed a petition to the Emperor, which she terminated by this phrase of truly angelic kindness: "Sire, I am going to kneel in my oratory, and I will not rise until I have obtained from Heaven Your Majesty's clemency." The Emperor could no longer refuse; he pardoned. M. M—— was let off with a month of close arrest. M. Larrey was commissioned by His Majesty to scold him roundly, so

that he should take better care thenceforward of the honor of the respectable body of which he formed part. The remonstrances of this excellent man were quite fatherly, and doubled in the eyes of M. M—— the value of the service he had rendered him.

M. the Baron Larrey did good disinterestedly; people knew this and often abused it. General d'A——, the son of a wealthy senator, had his shoulder fractured by a bullet at the battle of Wagram. An amputation was necessary. This alarming operation demanded a practised hand; M. Larrey alone could undertake it. He did so, and successfully; but the wounded man, who was naturally delicate, and now extremely enfeebled, required the greatest care and most unintermitted attention. M. Larrey seldom left him; he also placed near him two of his pupils, who watched alternately, and aided him in dressing the wound. The treatment was long and painful, but it ended in a perfect cure. When fully convalescent, the General took leave of the Emperor to return to France. A majorat and some decorations paid the debt owed him by the sovereign and the state. The manner in which he discharged his own to the man who saved his life is curious to know.

Just as he was about entering his carriage, he handed to a general of his acquaintance a letter and a little box, saying: "I cannot leave Vienna without thanking M. Larrey; do me the kindness to send him from me this token of my gratitude.

That good Larrey! I shall never forget the services he has rendered me." The next day, the friend acquitted himself of his commission. A gendarme was charged with the epistle and the present. He arrived at Schönbrunn during the parade, and inquired throughout the ranks for M. Larrey. "Here is a letter and a box I have brought him from General d'A——." M. Larrey put them both into his pocket; but, after the parade, he examined their contents, and, remitting the packet to M. Cadet de Gassicourt, he said to him: "Look at this and tell me what you think of it." The letter was very pretty; as to the box, it enclosed a diamond worth about sixty francs.

This mean recompense recalls a glorious and worthy one which M. Larrey had received from the Emperor during the Egyptian campaign.

At the battle of Aboukir, General Fugières was operated on by M. Larrey, under the enemy's fire, for a dangerous wound in the shoulder, and believing himself at the point of death, he offered his sword to General Bonaparte, saying: "General, some day you will perhaps envy my fate." The General-in-Chief presented this sword to M. Larrey, after having his name and that of the battle engraved upon it. However, General Fugières did not die. He was saved by the skilful operation he had undergone, and for seventeen years he commanded the disabled soldiers at Avignon.

CHAPTER VIII

Some reflections on the manners of the army officers — The military tone — Prince de Neufchâtel, Generals Bertrand, Bacler d'Albe, etc. — Prince Eugène, Marshals Oudinot, Davoust, Bessières, Generals Rapp, Lebrun, Lauriston, etc. — Affability and dignity — The *jays of the army* — The boudoir cartridge-box — Officers by favor — Officers of the line — Bravery and modesty — True courage opposed to duelling — Disinterestedness — Attachment of the officers for their soldiers — Breakfast of the grenadiers of the guard the eve of the battle of Wagram — The Emperor's orders contemned — Indignation of the Emperor — The guilty persons shot — The dog of the regiment — Death of General Oudet at Wagram — A confidence imparted to Constant by one of his officer friends — The *philadelphians* — Republican conspiracy against Napoleon — Oudet the chief of this conspiracy — Intrepidity of this general — Mysterious death — Suicides — Military breakfast the day after the battle of Wagram — Audacious theft — Heroic courage of a Saxon surgeon.

IT is impossible to seize certain differences in the manners and tone of military men while they are in face of the enemy. The exigencies of the service absorb all the time and thoughts of the officers, whatever their grade, and the uniformity of their occupations produces also a sort of uniformity in their habits and characters. But away from the battle-field their dissimilarities of nature and education reappear. I had experienced this many times during the truces and treaties of peace

which crowned the Emperor's most glorious campaigns, and I had occasion to renew my observations on this head during our long stay at Schönbrunn with the army.

The military tone is one of the things most difficult to define in the army. This tone differs according to the grades, the time of service, and the kind of service. In reality, there are no military men but those who belong to the line, or who command it. In the opinion of the soldiers, Prince de Neufchâtel and his brilliant staff, the grand marshal, Generals Bertrand, Bacler d'Albe, etc., were merely cabinet officials, whose attainments might make them good for something, but to whom bravery was not indispensable.

The principal generals, such as Prince Eugène, Marshals Oudinot, Davoust, Bessières, and His Majesty's aides-de-camp, Rapp, Lebrun, Lauriston, Mouton, etc., were thoroughly urbane; their dignity never approached arrogance, nor their ease an excessive familiarity; their manners always bore the impress of a wholly soldier-like severity. The army had not the same idea of several of the orderly officers and aides-de-camp. Even while according to them the consideration merited by their education and courage, they were called the *army jays*, obtaining favors better deserved by others, gaining ribbons and majorats for bearing despatches in camp without ever seeing the enemy, insulting by their luxury the modest uniform of the bravest officers, occupied

incessantly with their toilet, and still more foppish in the midst of battalions than in the boudoirs of their mistresses. There was one of these gentlemen whose silver-gilt cartridge-box was a complete little dressing-case, containing, instead of cartridges, perfume bottles, brushes, a mirror, a tongue-scraper, a shell-comb, and — I am not sure that there was not even a pot of rouge. It was not that they were not brave; they would have let themselves be killed for a look; but they seldom found themselves exposed. Foreigners would have reason to lay it down as an axiom that *the French military man* is light, presumptuous, impertinent, and immoral, if they appreciated him by the standard of these officers by favor, who, instead of study and service, had sometimes no other right to their grades than the merit of having emigrated.

The officers of the line, who had made several campaigns and gained their epaulettes on battle-fields, seemed very different to the army; grave, polite, and obliging, there was a sort of fraternity between them. Having had a near view of poverty and suffering, they were always ready to succor others; their conversation was not remarkable for brilliant information, but it was often full of interest. Generally, the habit of boasting quitted them along with their earliest youth, and the bravest were always the most modest. The false point of honor had no great ascendency over them, because they knew their own worth, and the fear of being

supposed cowardly was beneath them. For them, who sometimes united the greatest kindliness to a vivacity not less great, a contradiction or even an insult, uttered by a brother in arms, did not absolutely need to be washed out in blood, and examples of this moderation, which true courage alone is entitled to display, were not rare in the army. The most generous and those who cared least for money were those who were most exposed,—the artillerymen, the hussars. At Wagram I saw a lieutenant pay a louis a bottle for brandy and distribute it on the spot to the soldiers of his company. These brave officers were sometimes so attached to their regiments, especially if they were distinguished, that they would refuse promotion rather than be separated from their children, as they called them. It is here that the type of French military men should be looked for; it is this kindliness blended with soldierly firmness, this attachment of captains for their soldiers, an attachment which the latter know so well how to appreciate; it is this unshaken honor, which should distinguish our soldiers, and not, as foreigners believe, the presumption, the braggadocio, the libertinage which belong only to certain *parasites of glory*.

At camp Lobau, the day before the battle of Wagram, the Emperor was walking around his tent. He stopped for a moment to look at the grenadiers of the guard, who were breakfasting. "Well, my children, how do you like the wine?" "It won't

make us drunk, Sire; there is our cellar," said a soldier, pointing to the Danube. The Emperor, who had ordered a good bottle of wine for each soldier, was surprised to find them dieted on the eve of a battle. He asked the reason from Prince de Neufchâtel; inquiries were made, and it was learned that two storekeepers and a victualling clerk had sold for their own benefit forty thousand bottles intended for the distribution, and that they intended to replace it by an inferior wine. It was valued at thirty thousand florins, and had been seized by the imperial guard in a rich abbey. The guilty persons were arrested, tried, and condemned to death.

At the camp of Lobau there was a dog which all the army, I think, knew under the name of *corps-de-garde*. He was old, dirty, and ugly, but his moral qualities soon obliterated all memory of his external defects. Hence he was sometimes called the bravest dog of the Empire. He had received a bayonet thrust at Marengo; he had had a paw broken by a shot at Austerlitz. He was then attached to a regiment of dragoons, for he had no master. He would attach himself to a corps and remain faithful to it so long as he was well fed and not beaten. A kick, or a blow with the flat of a sabre, would make him desert the regiment and pass to another. He had a rare intelligence. Whatever might be the position of the corps in which he served, he would not abandon it, and never confounded it with the

others. In the hottest of the fray, he was always close to the flag he had selected. If, in camp, he met a soldier of the regiment he had deserted, you would see him drop his ears, put his tail between his legs, and slink away as fast as possible to his new brethren in arms. When his regiment was marching, he scampered everywhere on scout duty, warning them by his barking of all that he found extraordinary. More than once he saved his comrades from an ambuscade.

Among the officers who perished at the battle of Wagram, or rather in a particular engagement which took place when the battle was already over, General Oudet was one of those who were most regretted by the soldiers. He was one of the most intrepid generals of the army; but what brings his name especially to my memory, rather than that of any other lost by the army on that memorable day, is a note I have preserved of a conversation I had some years after the battle with an excellent officer to whom I was united by the most sincere friendship.

In an interview which I had with Lieutenant-Colonel B——, in 1812, he said to me: "I must tell you, my dear Constant, the curious adventure that happened to me at Wagram. I did not tell you at the time, because I had promised to keep silence; but now that no one can be compromised any longer by my indiscretion, and that even those who would then have dreaded most that their singular ideas (for I have never called them otherwise)

should be revealed, would be the first to laugh at them, I may very well acquaint you with the mysterious discovery I made at this period.

"You know that I was in very close intimacy with poor F——, whom we have so greatly regretted. He was one of the gayest and most amiable of our young officers, and his good qualities made him dear, especially to those who had, like him, a constant propensity to frankness and good humor. Suddenly I found his manners changing, as well as those of some of his habitual companions; they appeared sombre, no longer assembled for cheerful pleasantries, but on the contrary were always mysteriously whispering together. This sudden change had struck me on several occasions; I had chanced to meet them frequently in out-of-the-way places, and instead of greeting me cordially, as they had been accustomed to do, they seemed desirous to avoid me. At last, tired of this mystery which I could not understand, I one day took F—— aside and asked what this strange conduct signified. 'You have forestalled me, my dear fellow,' said he; 'I was about to make you an important communication; I don't want you to accuse me of a lack of confidence; but swear to me, before I confide in you, that you will not tell to a living soul one word of what I am about to say.' When I had taken this oath, which he demanded in a tone very serious, and to me most surprising, F—— added: 'If I have never spoken to you of the *philadelphians*, it is

because I knew that reasons which I respect would prevent you from joining them; but since you ask me for this secret, it would be a lack of confidence, and perhaps an imprudence not to reveal it to you. Several patriots have united under the title of *philadelphians* to save the country from the dangers to which it is exposed. The Emperor Napoleon has tarnished the glory of First Consul Bonaparte; he has saved our liberty, and he has torn it from us by the re-establishment of the nobles and the Concordat. The society of *philadelphians* has not as yet any settled means for preventing the evil which ambition would continue to do to France; it is when peace shall be restored to us that we shall see whether it is henceforward impossible to bring back Bonaparte to republican institutions; meanwhile we are overwhelmed with sorrow and despair. The brave chieftain of the *philadelphians*, the virtuous Oudet, has been assassinated. Who will be worthy to replace him! Poor Oudet! Never was any one more audacious, more eloquent, than he! To a noble loftiness of character and unshaken firmness he joined an excellent heart. His first battle showed all the energy of his soul. Knocked down at San-Bartolomeo by a shot, his comrades wished to raise him. "No, no," he cried, "don't busy yourselves with me; at the Spaniards! at the Spaniards!" "Shall we leave you to the enemy?" said one of those who had approached him. "Well, repulse them then, if you don't want them to have

me." At the opening of the Wagram campaign, he was colonel of the 9th regiment of the line; he was made general of brigade on the eve of battle. His corps formed part of the left wing, commanded by Masséna. It was on this side that our line was broken for a moment. Oudet made incredible efforts to reform it. Struck three times by a lance, losing quantities of blood, dragged along by those of ours who were forced to recoil, he had himself tied to his horse so as not to leave the combat.

"'After the battle he was ordered to go forward and place himself and his regiment in an advantageous post for observation, and to return at once to headquarters with a certain number of his officers to receive new orders. He executed this movement and returned during the night. All of a sudden a discharge of musketry was heard; he fell into an ambush; he combated furiously in the darkness without knowing either the number or the nature of his adversaries. At break of day he was found stretched out, riddled with wounds, in the midst of twenty officers massacred around him. He was breathing still. . . . He lived three days, and the only words he could utter were to mourn the fate of his country. When his body was taken from the hospital to receive the last honors, several wounded men tore off their bandages in despair; a sergeant-major threw himself upon his sword beside his grave, and a lieutenant blew out his brains. This,' added F——, 'is what plunges us into the most

profound affliction.' I tried to prove to him that he was mistaken, and demonstrate that the schemes of the *philadelphians* were follies, but I did not altogether succeed, and even while listening to my advice, he strongly recommended me to secrecy."

I think it was the day after the battle of Wagram that a rather large number of officers came to breakfast near the Emperor's tent. The generals sat on the grass, and the officers stood around them. There was a great deal of talk about the battle, and several very remarkable incidents were related which have remained graven in my memory. An orderly officer said to His Majesty: "I thought I had lost my finest horse. As I had ridden him on the 5th, and wanted him to rest, I gave him to my servant to rein him in; he left him for a moment to rebridle his own; the horse was stolen in a moment, between him and me, by a dragoon who, without delay, went and sold him to a dismounted captain, saying that it was one of the horses taken. I recognized it in the ranks and reclaimed it, proving by my portmanteau and my effects, which were upon it, that it had not been taken from the Austrians. I reimbursed the captain for the twenty louis he had given the dragoon for this horse which had cost me sixty."

Perhaps the finest incident of the day was this: M. Salsdorf, a Saxon surgeon of Prince Christian's regiment, had his leg fractured by a shell in the first part of the battle. Extended on the ground,

he saw M. Amédée de Kerbourg, an aide-de-camp, who, bruised by a ball, fell and began to vomit blood. He saw that this officer would die of apoplexy if he were not assisted: collecting his forces, he crept and crawled through the dust until he reached him, bled him, and saved his life.

M. de Kerbourg could not embrace his preserver. M. Salsdorf, transported to Vienna, lived only four days after his amputation.

CHAPTER IX

Benefits conferred by the Emperor during his stay at Schönbrunn — Anecdote — The Mahometan child carried off by corsairs — Another Héloïse — Second abduction — Distress — Journey on foot from Constantinople to Vienna — Marriage of a converted Mahometan to a French officer — Journey of Madame Dartois to Constantinople — Terror and flight — Madame Dartois a widow for the second time — Applications made to the Emperor — M. Jaubert, the Duc de Bassano, and General Lebrun — Generosity and gratitude — The 15th of August at Vienna — Singular illumination — Frightful accident — The commissary-general of the Viennese police — Anecdote — Curious blunder of an officer — A passion for gaming and treason — The spy surprised and shot — A conscript's courage and the Emperor's gaiety — Lord Paget's mistress — Advances made to the Countess in the Emperor's name — Hesitation — A bold resolution — The policeman — The plot discovered — Confidence of the Emperor — His courage at Essling — The Emperor's solicitude for his soldiers — Schönbrunn the rendezvous for savants — Maëlzel the mechanician — The Emperor playing chess with an automaton — The Emperor cheats and is beaten — Fine action of Prince de Neufchâtel — Gratitude of two young girls.

AT Schönbrunn, as elsewhere, His Majesty signalized his presence by his good deeds. One trait which people long talked of at this period has remained impressed on my memory.

A little girl of nine years, belonging to a rich and much respected family of Constantinople, was

carried off by pirates one day as she was walking outside the city with a maid-servant. The pirates transported their two captives to Anatolia and sold them. The little girl, who promised to be charming some day, fell into the hands of a rich merchant of Brusa, the most severe, rigid, and intractable man in the city. Nevertheless, the artless graces of the child affected his savage temper; he had the greatest respect for her, made a distinction between her and his other slaves, and employed her in none but easy tasks, such as caring for flowers, etc. A European who was lodging with him offered to take charge of her education, and her owner consented all the more willingly because she had gained his heart, and he wished to marry her as soon as she should be old enough. But the European had conceived the same idea, and as he was young, good-looking, full of intelligence, and very rich, he easily succeeded in winning the young slave, who escaped one fine day from her master's house and, like a new Héloïse, followed her Abelard to Kutaya, where they remained in hiding for six months.

She was then ten years old; her preceptor, who daily loved her better, took her to Constantinople and confided her to the care of a Greek bishop, whom he instructed to make a good Christian of her. From there he started for Vienna to seek the consent of his family and his government to make her his wife.

Two years slipped by: the poor girl received no

tidings of her future husband. The bishop was dead, and his heirs had abandoned Marie (the baptismal name of the converted Mahometan), and she, having neither aid nor protector, was in constant danger of being discovered by some relative, some friend of her family, and it is known that the Turks never pardon a change of religion. Tormented by a thousand anxieties, tired of the profound obscurity of her retreat, she took the bold resolution of rejoining her benefactor. The dangers of the journey did not deter her. She left Constantinople alone and on foot; and, on arriving at the Austrian capital, she learned that her husband had been dead more than a year.

It is easy to understand the despair into which the poor child must now have been plunged. What could she do? What would become of her? She determined to return to her family. She went to Trieste and found that city in a frightful condition. It had just received a French garrison, but the troubles inseparable from war were not yet over. Little Marie entered a Greek convent to await a favorable moment for returning to Constantinople. There she was seen by a young sub-lieutenant of infantry, named Dartois, who fell violently in love with her, and married her at the end of a year.

The happiness enjoyed by Madame Dartois did not persuade her to relinquish her scheme of going to see her family. Having become a Frenchwoman, she hoped that this title would induce her relatives

to pardon her. Her husband's regiment having been ordered away from Trieste, she seized this occasion to renew her entreaties for his permission to go to Constantinople. He consented, but not without laying before her all the dangers and risks to which this journey would expose her. At last she set out, and a few days after her arrival, when she was about to make her advances to her family, she recognized in the street, through her veil, the merchant of Brusa, her first master, who was searching for her all over Constantinople, and who had sworn to kill her should he discover her.

This terrible encounter alarmed her to such a degree that for three years she lived in continual anxiety, hardly daring to stir out of doors even for her most urgent affairs, and always dreading to see the ferocious Anatolian once more. From time to time she received letters from her husband, who acquainted her with the movements of the French armies and his own advancement; in the later ones he implored her to return to France, hoping soon to be able to rejoin her there.

Having lost all hope of being reconciled to her family, Madame Dartois concluded to do as her husband wished, and although the war between Russia and the Turks made the roads insecure, she left Constantinople in July, 1809.

After crossing Hungary and passing through the Austrian camps, Madame Dartois turned toward Vienna, where she had the grief of learning, at

Gratz, that her husband had been mortally wounded at the battle of Wagram. He was in that city; she was taken to him, and he breathed his last in her arms.

She mourned her husband for a long time. But it was soon necessary to consider the future; the little money she had left on her departure from Constantinople had scarcely sufficed for the expenses of her journey. M. Dartois had left nothing behind him; several persons advised the poor woman to go to Schönbrunn and seek assistance from His Majesty. A superior officer gave her a letter of recommendation to M. Jaubert, the Emperor's interpreting secretary.

Madame Dartois arrived just as His Majesty was preparing to leave Schönbrunn. She addressed herself to M. Jaubert, the Duc de Bassano, General Lebrun, and several others, who took a keen interest in her misfortunes. The Emperor, apprised by the Duc de Bassano of the deplorable condition in which this lady found herself, instantly issued a special decree by which Madame Dartois became entitled to an annual pension of sixteen hundred francs, the first year to be paid her in advance. When the Duc de Bassano came to tell the widow what His Majesty had done for her, she fell at his knees and bedewed them with her tears.

The Emperor's birthday was celebrated at Vienna with much splendor. All the inhabitants felt obliged to illuminate their windows, and that pro-

duced a truly remarkable sight. There were no lanterns, but nearly all the windows being double-sashed, lamps and candles had been arranged very artistically between the two glasses, and the effect was charming. The Austrians seemed as gay as our soldiers; they would not have fêted their own Emperor with as much eagerness. There was doubtless something forced at the bottom of this unaccustomed mirth, but appearances betrayed nothing of it.

The day before the fête, during the parade, a terrible explosion was heard at Schönbrunn, the noise seeming to come from the city. Some minutes later, a gendarme was seen galloping up at full speed. "Oh! oh!" said Colonel Mechnem, laughing, "Vienna must be on fire. A gendarme galloping!" He came to announce a very deplorable event. A company of artillerymen were preparing in the city arsenal some fireworks to celebrate His Majesty's birthday. One of them, in squeezing a bomb, set fire to the fuse; he was frightened and threw it away from him, and it lighted the powder contained in the workshop. Eighteen cannoneers were killed instantly and seven wounded.

About the time of His Majesty's fête, as I went into his cabinet one morning, I found with him M. Charles Sulmetter, commissary-general of the Viennese police. I had already seen him several times; he had begun as first spy of the Emperor, and the trade had been so profitable that he now possessed an income of forty thousand livres. He

was born at Strasburg, where he had commenced by being the chief of the smugglers in Alsace; nature having marvellously organized him for that pursuit, as well as for that he afterwards followed. He said so himself when relating his adventures, and he claimed that there is much in common between smugglers and policemen, the great art of a smuggler being to know how to hide, and that of the detective to know how to find.

He inspired such terror in the Viennese that he was worth a whole army corps for keeping them in order. His keen and penetrating glance, his air of resolution and severity, the abruptness of his gait and gestures, a terrible voice, and a vigorous appearance fully justified his reputation. His adventures would be a treasure-trove to some romancer. During the first campaigns in Germany, being entrusted with a message from the French government to one of the most important personages of the Austrian army, he passed over to the enemy disguised as a German jeweller, duly provided with passports, and supplied with a large quantity of diamonds and precious stones. He was betrayed, arrested, and searched. His letter was hidden in the double lining of a gold box: it was found, and the finder was stupid enough to read it aloud in his presence. Tried and condemned to death, he was handed over to the soldiers who were to shoot him; but it was night, and his execution was deferred until the next day. Among his guards he recognized a French

deserter; he chatted with him, and promised him plenty of money; he sent for wine, drank with the soldiers, made them drunk, put on one of their uniforms, and escaped with the Frenchman; but, before returning to camp, he found means to communicate with the person to whom the captured letter was addressed, and acquaint him with its contents and what had happened to him.

The army was frequently given countersigns difficult to remember, in order to fix attention more closely. One day the word was *Pericles, Persepolis.* A captain of the guard, who knew the art of commanding a charge better than he did Greek history and geography, heard it badly and gave it out as *perce l'église* (pierce the church). There was a good deal of laughing over this *quid pro quo.* The old captain was by no means disturbed about it, saying that after all he was not so far out of the way.

The secretary of General Andréossy, governor of Vienna, had the unfortunate passion of gaming, and finding that he did not win enough to meet his expenses, he sold himself to the enemy. His correspondence was seized, he admitted his treason, and was condemned to death. At the moment of execution he displayed astonishing coolness: "Come nearer," he said to the soldiers who were to shoot him; "you will take better aim at me so, and I shall have less to suffer."

In one of his excursions around Vienna, the Emperor met a very young conscript who was

rejoining his corps; he stopped him and asked his name, his age, his regiment, and his country. "Monsieur," replied the soldier, who did not know him, "my name is Martin, I am seventeen years old, and I come from the Upper Pyrenees." — "You are a Frenchman then?" "Yes, Monsieur." — "Ah! you are a rogue of a Frenchman! . . . Disarm this man, somebody, and hang him." "Yes, f—, I am a Frenchman," repeated the conscript, "*and long live the Emperor!*" His Majesty laughed a good deal; the conscript was undeceived, congratulated, and ran to rejoin his comrades with the promise of a recompense, a promise which the Emperor was not slow to keep.

Two or three days before his departure from Vienna, the Emperor again ran the risk of being assassinated. This time the blow was to have been struck by a woman.

The Countess M—— attracted the notice of everybody at this period, as much on account of her marvellous beauty as because of the scandal created by her liaison with Lord Paget, the English ambassador. It would not be easy to find expressions which would adequately describe the grace and charm of this lady, to whom Viennese society opened its doors with a sort of repugnance, but who made herself amends for its contempt by receiving in her own house all that was most brilliant in the French army.

An army purveyor took it into his head to procure

the acquaintance of this lady for the Emperor, and without informing His Majesty, he made propositions to the Countess through one of his friends, a cavalry officer attached to the military police of the city of Vienna.

The cavalry officer believed himself to be speaking on behalf of the Emperor, and he said to the Countess, in perfectly good faith, that His Majesty had the greatest desire to see her at Schönbrunn. He gave this invitation one morning for that evening, which seemed a trifle abrupt to the Countess, who would not decide at once, but asked for a day to think about it, adding that she would require indefeasible proofs that the Emperor really had a hand in the matter. The officer protested his own sincerity, promised moreover to give every proof she could demand, and made an appointment with her for the evening. Having given an account of his negotiation to the purveyor, the latter gave the necessary orders for a carriage to be ready at the time indicated by the Countess to the cavalry officer. At the hour appointed, the officer returned to her house, expecting to fetch her back with him, but she begged him to return the following day, saying that she had not yet decided, and must have the night for still further reflection. The observations made by the officer induced her to accept, however, but only for the next day, and she gave him her word of honor to be ready at the hour when he should come to find her.

The carriage, therefore, was sent away, with orders to return the following day at the same hour. This time, the envoy of the purveyor found the Countess very well inclined. She received him gayly, even with alacrity, and made him notice that she had put all her affairs in order, as if she were contemplating some long journey; then, after looking him full in the face for some moments, she said, thee-ing and thou-ing him: "Thou canst return in an hour, I will be ready; I will go to see *him*, thou mayst count upon it. Yesterday I had business to arrange, but to-day I am at liberty. If thou art a good Austrian, thou wilt prove it to me; thou knowest what harm he has done to our country! Eh! well, this evening our country will be avenged! Come and get me, don't fail!"

The cavalry officer, frightened by such a confidence, would not bear the responsibility of it. He came to the castle and told the whole. The Emperor richly rewarded him, made him promise, in his own interest, not to see the Countess again, and expressly forbade him to let the affair go any further. All these dangers did not produce the least alteration in his temper; he was accustomed to say: "What have I to fear? I cannot be assassinated; I shall die nowhere but on the field of battle." And even on the battle-field he took no precautions whatever. At Essling, for example, he exposed himself like a chief of battalion who wishes to become a colonel: bullets killed men

beside, behind, in front of him; he never budged. This went so far that a frightened general exclaimed: "Sire, if Your Majesty does not withdraw I shall be obliged to have you taken away by my grenadiers." Judge by that whether the Emperor dreamed of taking precautions for himself! But the signs of exasperation manifested by the inhabitants of Vienna made him watch over the safety of his troops; he had expressly forbidden the soldiers to leave their cantonments in the evening. His Majesty was alarmed for them.

The castle of Schönbrunn was the rendezvous of all the illustrious savants of Germany. Not a new work was brought out, not a curious invention made its appearance, but the Emperor at once gave orders to have their authors presented to him. It was thus that M. Maëlzel, the famous mechanician who invented the metronome, was admitted to the honor of offering to His Majesty several pieces of his invention. The Emperor admired the artificial legs intended to replace, better and more commodiously than wooden ones, those that had been torn away by ball. He commissioned him to construct a car to convey the wounded from the field of battle. This car was to be made in such a way that, on being folded up, it could easily take in behind the mounted men in the train of the army, such as surgeons, aides, employees, etc. M. Maëlzel had also constructed an automaton known all over Europe as the *chess-player*. He brought it to Schönbrunn to

show it to His Majesty, and set it up in the apartment of Prince de Neufchâtel. The Emperor went there, and I followed him with several other persons. The automaton was seated in front of a table on which a chess-board was arranged for a game. His Majesty took a chair, and sitting down opposite the automaton, said, laughing: "Come on, comrade; here's to us two." The automaton saluted and made a sign with the hand to the Emperor, as if to bid him begin. The game opened, the Emperor made two or three moves, and intentionally a false one. The automaton bowed, took up the piece and put it back in its place. His Majesty cheated a second time; the automaton saluted again, but confiscated the piece. "*That is right,*" said His Majesty, and cheated the third time. Then the automaton shook its head, and passing its hand over the chess-board, it upset the whole game.

The Emperor complimented the mechanician highly. As he left the apartment, accompanied by Prince de Neufchâtel, we found in the antechamber two young girls who presented the Prince, on behalf of their mother, with a basket of magnificent fruit. As the Prince received them with an air of familiarity, the Emperor, curious to know who they were, approached and questioned them, but they did not understand French. Some one then told His Majesty that these two pretty girls were the daughters of a good woman whose life had been saved by Marshal Berthier in 1805. He was riding alone on horse-

back, the cold was horrible, and the ground covered with snow. He saw a woman lying at the foot of a tree, apparently in a dying condition. She was nearly frozen. The Marshal took her in his arms, placed her on his horse, covered her with his cloak, and brought her back in this way to her daughters, who were at home, crying over her absence. He went away without having made himself known, but they recognized him at the time Vienna was taken, and every week the two sisters came to see their benefactor, bringing him baskets of fruit or flowers in token of their gratitude.

CHAPTER X

Excursion to Raab — *L'Évêque* and *Soliman* — M. Jardin's misapprehension — Sensibility of the Emperor — A painful duty — The Chouans of Normandy — The female brigand — Heart-rending scene — Conjugal affection — Despair and madness — The Archduke Charles at the meet — Departure from Schönbrunn — Arrival at Passau — The widow of a German physican — Terror of the inhabitants of Augsburg — Kindness of General Lecourbe — Good action of a grenadier — Maternal despair and joy — Rapid journey of the Emperor — Arrival at Fontainebleau — The Emperor's ill-humor — His predilection for the Lyons manufactories — Forced march of His Majesty — Severe reception given to the Empress — Josephine's tears — The Emperor's reparation.

TOWARD the end of September, the Emperor made a journey to Raab; he was about to mount his horse to return to the residence of Schönbrunn when he perceived the Bishop of Raab at a little distance. "Is not that the Bishop?" said he to M. Jardin, who was holding his horse's head. "No, Sire, it is *Soliman*." "I ask you if that is not the Bishop?" repeated His Majesty, pointing at the prelate. M. Jardin, wholly intent on his own business, and thinking of nothing but one of the Emperor's horses which was called *The Bishop*, answered: "Sire, I assure you that you rode him the last relay but one." The Emperor perceived his mistake and shouted with laughter.

At Wagram I witnessed a trait which attests all the bounty and sensibility of the Emperor, of which I think I have given several proofs already; for if, in the story I am going to tell, he was compelled to deny himself an act of clemency, even his refusal brings out his admirable generosity and strength of soul.

A very wealthy lady, living near Caen, Madame de Combray, handed over her château to a band of Royalists who considered themselves to be serving their cause worthily by plundering stage-coaches on the high roads. She acted as treasurer to this body of partisans, and passed over the funds to a pretended treasurer of Louis XVIII. Her daughter, Madame Aquet, joined the band, dressed like a man, and distinguished herself by her audacity. But their exploits were not of long duration; pursued and seized by superior forces, they were brought to trial, and Madame Aquet was condemned to death along with her accomplices. She feigned pregnancy and obtained a reprieve, during which she tried every possible means to secure her pardon, but in vain. Finally, after eight months of useless solicitations, she determined to send her children to Germany to ask it from the Emperor in person. Her physician, her sister, and her two daughters arrived at Schönbrunn the day the Emperor was about to visit the field of Wagram. All day long, on the front steps of the palace, they awaited his return. The two children, one of

whom was ten years old and the other twelve, inspired much interest; but their mother's crime was frightful, for if, in politics, no opinion as such is guilty, still, under whatever government, those should be punished who, for opinion's sake, become robbers and assassins. The children, dressed in mourning, threw themselves at the feet of the Emperor, crying: "Pardon, pardon, give us back our mother!" The Emperor raised them kindly, took the petition from the hands of their aunt, read the whole of it attentively, questioned the physician with interest . . . looked at the children . . . hesitated . . . but at the moment when I thought, as every one else did who was present at this touching scene, that he was about to pronounce the pardon, he drew back hastily, saying: "I cannot do it! . . ." I had seen the interior combat he was going through; several times he had changed color, his eyes were swimming in tears, his voice was changed. His refusal seemed to me an act of courage.

Close beside the souvenir of these acts of criminal violence, all the more to be condemned, perhaps, because they proceeded from a woman who, in order to commit them, must first have spurned the gentleness and modest virtues of her sex, I find in my notes a trait of fidelity and conjugal affection which might have merited a better fate. The wife of a colonel of infantry would never quit her husband. While the army was on the march,

she followed the regiment in an open carriage; when there was fighting going on, she mounted a horse and kept as close as possible to the line. At Friedland she saw the colonel fall, pierced by a bullet; she ran to him with her servant, carried him out of the ranks herself, and brought him to the ambulance; but it was too late, he was dead. Her grief was silent; no one beheld her shed a tear. She offered her purse to a surgeon and besought him to embalm her husband's body. The operation was performed as well as possible. The corpse, wrapped in cloths, was put into a hinged casket and placed in her carriage. The despairing widow sat down beside it and resumed the road to France, but her suppressed grief soon deprived her of reason. At every station she would shut herself up with her precious charge, draw the body from the casket, place it on a bed, uncover the face, lavish on it the tenderest caresses, talk to it as if it were still living, and sleep beside it. In the morning she would replace her husband in the casket and continue on her way in dismal silence. Her secret was undiscovered for several days, but it was disclosed a few days before she arrived in Paris. The embalmment had not been performed in such a manner as to guarantee the body from putrefaction for a long period. This advanced to such a point that the frightful odor exhaled from the casket awakened suspicions in an inn where she was stopping: in the evening the room of this

unhappy wife was entered and she was found holding in her arms the horribly disfigured body of her husband. . . . "Silence!" she cried to the terror-stricken innkeeper, "my husband is asleep. . . . Why do you come to disturb his glorious slumber?" They had hard work to extricate the corpse from the embrace of this mad woman, and to conduct her to Paris, where she soon died, without having once regained her reason.

There was much surprise evinced at Schönbrunn at the non-appearance there of the Archduke Charles, whom we knew to be greatly esteemed by the Emperor, who never mentioned him but in terms expressive of the highest consideration. I am entirely ignorant of the motives which prevented this prince from coming to Schönbrunn, or the Emperor from receiving him there. However that may be, two or three days previous to the departure for Munich, His Majesty left the castle one morning for a hunt with several officers and me, and had us halt at a meet called the Vénerie, on the road from Vienna to Bukusdorf. On arriving, we found the Archduke Charles, who was awaiting His Majesty with only two members of his suite. The sovereign and the Archduke remained shut up in the pavilion for a long time, and it was very late when we returned to Schönbrunn.

The Emperor departed from this residence at noon, October 16. His Majesty's suite included Grand Marshal Duc de Frioul, Generals Rapp,

Mouton, Savary, Nansouty, Durosnel, Lebrun, three chamberlains, M. Labbé, head of the topographic bureau, M. de Menneval, His Majesty's secretary, and M. Yvan. The Duc de Bassano and the Duc de Cadore, then minister of external relations, left with us.

We reached Passau in the morning of the 18th. The Emperor spent the entire day in visiting forts Maximilian and Napoleon, and seven or eight redoubts whose names recalled the principal events of the campaign. More than twelve thousand men were at work on these important constructions. His Majesty's visit was a fête for all these honest people. In the evening we set out again, and two days later we were in Munich.

At Augsburg, as he was coming out of the palace of the Elector of Treves, the Emperor saw a woman surrounded by four children kneeling in the street, where he would be obliged to pass her. He raised her, and kindly inquired what he could do for her. Without speaking, the poor woman handed to His Majesty a petition written in German, which General Rapp translated. She was the widow of a German physician named Buiting, recently deceased, who was known to the army for his zeal in assisting wounded Frenchmen when they happened to come in his way. The Elector of Treves and several members of the Emperor's suite earnestly supported the petition of Madame Buiting, whom the death of her husband had well-nigh reduced to

poverty, and who asked His Majesty for some assistance for the children of the German physician whose exertions had saved the lives of several of his brave soldiers. His Majesty ordered the first yearly instalment of a pension, to which he instantly entitled her, to be paid to his petitioner on the spot. General Rapp having apprised the widow of what the Emperor had done for her, she uttered a cry of joy and fainted.

I was witness of another scene equally affecting. When the Emperor was marching on Vienna, the inhabitants of Augsburg, who had conducted themselves badly toward the Bavarians, were trembling lest His Majesty should resort to terrible reprisals. Their terror was at its height when it was learned that a part of the French army was to pass through the city. A young woman of remarkable beauty, who had been a widow for some months, had retired thither with her child, hoping to be more quiet there than elsewhere. Alarmed at the approach of the troops, she took her child in her arms and fled. But instead of avoiding our soldiers, she took a wrong gate and fell into the midst of the French outposts. General Lecourbe saw her trembling, distraught; and conjuring him to save her honor, even at the expense of her life, she fainted. Affected to tears, the General lavished attentions on her, and gave her a safe-conduct and an escort to accompany her to a neighboring city, where she said she had several relatives. The order to march

was given at the same moment, and in the movements which it entailed the child was forgotten when the mother was removed, and it remained with the outposts. An honest grenadier took it, and inquiring where the poor mother had been taken, he promised himself to give it back to her as soon as possible, providing that a ball did not take him off before the return of the army. He had a leather pocket made, in which he carried his young protégé, under the shelter of his knapsack. Whenever he had to fight, the good grenadier made a hole in the ground, put the little one in it, and came for it again after the affair was over. His comrades jeered at him the first day, but they were not slow to comprehend the beauty of his action. The child escaped every danger, thanks to the continual cares of its adoptive father, and when they set out on the road to Munich the grenadier, who had become singularly attached to the poor little thing, almost regretted that the moment was approaching when he must restore it to its mother.

It is easy to comprehend what this unfortunate creature must have suffered after losing her child; she begged, she entreated the soldiers escorting her to retrace their steps, but they had orders, and nothing could induce them to infringe them. Hardly had she reached her place of destination when she returned to Augsburg, and made inquiries in all directions; no one could give her any information. She believed her son was dead, and bitterly deplored

him. She had been mourning thus for nearly six months when the army again passed through Augsburg. She was at work in her room when some one came to tell her that a soldier was asking to see her, that he had something precious to return to her, but that, as he could not leave his corps, he begged her to come and find him on the place. Not dreaming of such a happiness, she came and asked for the grenadier. The latter quitted his rank, and taking the little man out of his knapsack, he put him into the arms of his mother, who could not believe the testimony of her own eyes. Thinking that perhaps this lady was not rich, this excellent man had made a collection amounting to twenty-five louis, which he had placed in one of the little fellow's pockets.

The Emperor remained only a short time at Munich. On the day of his arrival, a courier was despatched by the grand marshal to M. de Luçay, to apprise him that His Majesty would be at Fontainebleau the 27th of October, probably in the evening, and that his household and that of the Empress must be at that residence to receive His Majesty. But instead of arriving on the 27th, the Emperor travelled with such rapidity that he was at the gate of the palace of Fontainebleau by ten o'clock in the morning, October 26, so that with the exception of the grand marshal, a courier, and the concierge of Fontainebleau, he found no one to receive him when he alighted from his carriage. This very natural disappointment, since nobody could foresee that he

would be a day ahead of time, put the Emperor in a very bad humor; he looked all around as if searching for somebody to scold, and seeing that the courier was about to descend from his horse, on which he was rather glued than seated, he said to him: "Rest yourself to-morrow; hasten to Saint-Cloud and announce my arrival," and the poor courier galloped off again in the finest style.

The fault which dissatisfied His Majesty so keenly could not be attributed by him to any person; for, by order of the grand marshal, which was that of the Emperor, M. de Luçay had commanded the attendants of Their Majesties to be in readiness early the next morning; it was therefore that evening, at soonest, that they could arrive. It was necessary to wait till then.

Meanwhile, the Emperor began to visit the new apartments which he had had built in the château. The building in the court of the Cheval-Blanc, formerly used by the Military School, had been restored, enlarged, and decorated with extraordinary magnificence. It had been entirely converted into apartments of honor, in order, said His Majesty, to give employment to the manufactories of Lyons, which had been deprived of their foreign markets by the war. After having gone round and round them, the Emperor sat down, exhibiting signs of the greatest impatience; he was constantly inquiring what time it was, or else looking at his watch; at last he ordered me to get ready what he needed

for writing, and sat down at a small table, quite alone, inwardly swearing, no doubt, at his secretaries who did not come.

At five o'clock there came a carriage from Saint-Cloud. The Emperor, hearing it roll into the court, ran down precipitately, and while a footman opened the door and let down the steps, he said to the persons inside: "And the Empress?" They replied that Her Majesty the Empress had despatched them not more than a quarter of an hour ahead of her. "That is very lucky!" returned the Emperor, and turning round abruptly, he went upstairs again to the small library where he had begun to work.

At last the Empress arrived, just as it was about to strike six; it was quite dark. This time the Emperor did not go down. He inquired what it was he heard, and learning that Her Majesty had come, he kept on writing, without disturbing himself to go and receive her. It was the first time he had acted thus. The Empress found him sitting in his library. "Ah!" said His Majesty, "there you are, Madame; you do well, for I was just about to go to Saint-Cloud." And the Emperor, who had lifted his eyes from his work to fix them on the Empress, lowered them again when he finished speaking. This severe reception wounded Josephine greatly; she tried to excuse herself. His Majesty responded in a way that brought tears to her eyes, but he speedily repented and begged her pardon, acknowledging that he was in the wrong.

CHAPTER XI

Erroneous opinion concerning the divorce — The Emperor's motives — Affectionate precautions — A painful sacrifice — Courage and resignation of the Empress — The disappointed guests — The Emperor's gaiety — The King of Saxony at Fontainebleau — Friendship of the two monarchs — A walk to the bridge of Jena — The master's eye — The King of Saxony compliments His Majesty — The Emperor's preoccupation — Embarrassment of the Emperor and Empress — Mutual constraint — Sadness of the sojourn at Fontainebleau — Dejection of the Emperor — November 30 — Dismal repast — Terrible scene — The Empress fainting — Words that escaped from the Emperor — Fêtes given by the city of Paris — Horrible situation of the Empress — Description of an imperial banquet — Arrival of Prince Eugène — His despair — Interview between the Emperor and the Viceroy — Affecting words of the Emperor — Ceremony of the divorce — Nocturnal visit from Josephine — Josephine's departure for Malmaison.

IT was not, as has been said in certain Memoirs, on account of and subsequently to the trifling quarrel I have just described, that His Majesty first conceived the idea of the divorce. The Emperor believed it needful for the welfare of France that he should have an heir to his name, and as the Empress could no longer hope to give him one, he must have contemplated a divorce. But it was by the gentlest means and with the utmost consideration that he sought to lead the Empress to this painful sacrifice;

he did not resort, as some would have us understand, to threats and fits of passion; it was to his wife's reason that he appealed, and she consented voluntarily. I repeat it; there was no violence on the part of the Emperor; there was courage, resignation, and submission on that of the Empress. Her devotion to the Emperor would have made her consent to every sacrifice; she would have given her life for him, and although this terrible separation broke her heart, she derived some consolation from the idea that she could spare the man she cherished above all others an inquietude, a torment, and when she heard that the King of Rome was born, she forgot all her griefs in order to think of nothing but the happiness of her friend; for they never ceased to entertain for each other feelings of the most perfect friendship.

The Emperor had taken nothing all day long on the 26th but a cup of chocolate and a little broth, hence I had heard him complain of hunger several times before the Empress arrived. The quarrel over, the couple embraced each other affectionately, and the Empress passed on into her apartments to make her toilet. While this was going on, the Emperor received MM. Decrès and de Montalivet, whom he had sent a groom to look for in the morning, and at half-past seven the Empress reappeared, dressed in perfect taste. In spite of the cold she had no head-dress but silver wheat ears and blue flowers, and wore a white satin polonaise bordered

with swan's down, which was admirably becoming. The Emperor interrupted his work to look at her. "I was not very long at my toilet, was I?" said she, smiling. Without answering, His Majesty pointed to the clock, then rose, and giving her his hand, said to MM. de Montalivet and Decrès as he was about to enter the dining-room: "I will be with you in five minutes." "But," said the Empress, "these gentlemen have probably not dined, since they have just come from Paris."—"Ah! that is true;" and the ministers went with Their Majesties into the dining-room, where they ate nothing, since the Emperor had scarcely seated himself when he got up again, threw down his napkin, and returned to his study, whither these gentlemen necessarily followed him, but, I think, to their extreme regret.

The day ended better than it had begun. In the evening there was a reception, not very large but very agreeable, at which the Emperor showed himself very gay and amiable; he seemed anxious to efface the recollection of the little scene he had had with the Empress.

Their Majesties remained at Fontainebleau until November 14. The King of Saxony had reached Paris the day before. The Emperor, who went nearly all the way from Fontainebleau to Paris on horseback, repaired on his arrival to the Élysée palace. The two monarchs seemed very much united, and went out together nearly every day. One morning, very early, they left the Tuileries on

foot, each with a single attendant; I was with the Emperor. They followed the river-bank and went in the direction of the Jena bridge, the works of which were being pushed with great activity. They had reached the Place de la Révolution where from fifty to sixty persons were assembled with the intention of accompanying the two sovereigns. This group began to annoy the Emperor, but some police agents dispersed them. On arriving at the bridge, His Majesty carefully examined the works, and finding something to criticise in the construction, he summoned the architect, who found the criticism just, although, before he would acknowledge it, the Emperor was obliged to talk a good deal, and go over the same explanations many times. Then His Majesty, turning toward the King of Saxony, said to him: "You see, cousin, the master's eye is needed everywhere." "Yes," replied the King of Saxony, "and especially of an eye so practised as Your Majesty's."

Almost as soon as we were at Fontainebleau, I noticed that the Emperor was constrained and preoccupied whenever he found himself with his august spouse. The same embarrassment was visible in the countenance of the Empress. This restraint and mutual observation soon became so apparent as to be remarked upon by everybody. Hence it followed that the sojourn at Fontainebleau was extremely wearisome and sad. At Paris, the presence of the King of Saxony caused a diversion, but the Empress

seemed more uneasy than ever. Every one exhausted himself in conjectures; for me, I knew only too well what to think. The Emperor looked more and more thoughtful daily, until November 30 arrived.

On that day the dinner was more silent than I had ever seen it. The Empress had wept all day long, and to conceal her pallor and the redness of her eyes as much as possible she wore a white hat tied under her chin, the front of which hid her forehead altogether. The Emperor's eyes were lowered almost continuously; from time to time convulsive movements disturbed his countenance, and if he occasionally raised his eyes, it was to cast a stealthy glance at the Empress, which plainly betrayed his profound affliction. The officers on duty, motionless as statues, observed this sombre and painful scene with curious anxiety, and throughout the repast, which was served only for form's sake, since Their Majesties touched nothing, all that was heard was the uniform sound of plates brought and taken away again, varied sadly by the monotonous voice of the kitchen officers and the tinkling produced by the Emperor in striking his knife mechanically against the side of his glass. Once only His Majesty broke the silence by a heavy sigh, followed by the words: "What time is it?" addressed to one of the officers, — a question without motive or result for the Emperor, for he either never heard or seemed not to hear the response. He rose from the table almost immediately, and the Empress followed him

with slow steps, her handkerchief over her mouth, as if to suppress her sobs. Coffee was brought, and, according to custom, a page presented the tray to the Empress that she might pour it, but the Emperor took it himself, poured the coffee into the cup, and put the sugar in it to melt, still looking at the Empress, who remained standing as if stupefied; he drank, and returned the whole service to the page. Afterwards he showed by a sign that he wished to be alone, and closed the door of the salon behind him. I stayed without, and sat down beside the door; soon there was no one left in the dining-room but one of the prefects of the palace, who walked up and down with folded arms, foreboding, like me, some terrible event. At the end of some minutes I heard shrieks; I rushed forward. The Emperor opened the door quickly, looked, and saw nobody but us two. . . . The Empress was on the floor, weeping and crying enough to break one's heart. "No, you will not do it! You do not want to kill me!" The usher of the chamber had his back turned; I ran to him, he understood me and went out. His Majesty called in the person who was with me, and the door was closed again. I have since known that the Emperor told him to lift the Empress, in order to carry her to her apartment; His Majesty said she had just had a violent nervous attack and that her situation called for the promptest attention. M. de B——, aided by the Emperor, raised the Empress in his arms, and His Majesty,

taking a candle from the chimney-piece, lighted M. de B—— through a lobby ending at the private staircase which brought his apartments into communication with those of the Empress. This extremely narrow staircase would not allow a man carrying such a burden to descend it without the risk of falling. M. de B—— said as much to His Majesty, who called the keeper of the portfolio, whose business it was to remain constantly at the door of the Emperor's study, which opened on this staircase, and gave him the candle, which was no longer needed, as the lanterns had just been lighted. His Majesty made the keeper go ahead, still holding the candle, and taking the Empress by the legs, he brought her down safely with M. de B——, and they reached the bedchamber in this fashion. Then the Emperor rang for the women; when they came he retired with tears in his eyes, and giving every sign of keen emotion. This scene had so affected him that he was betrayed into making some remarks to M. de B—— in a trembling and broken voice, which would never have issued from his lips under any other circumstance. Doubtless it needed an extreme distress to make His Majesty acquaint M. de B—— with the reason of Her Majesty's despair, —to make him say to him that the interests of France and the imperial dynasty had done violence to his heart, that the divorce had become a deplorable, rigorous duty, but nevertheless a duty.

Queen Hortense and M. Corvisart were soon with

the Empress, who passed a wretched night. On his part, the Emperor did not sleep; he rose several times to go to inquire for himself how Josephine was. Throughout the entire night, His Majesty never uttered a single word; I had never seen him in such affliction.

Meanwhile the King of Naples, the King of Westphalia, the King of Würtemberg, and the queens and princesses of the imperial family were arriving in Paris to be present at the fêtes to be given to His Majesty by the city, in rejoicing over the victories and the peace with Germany, as well as to celebrate the anniversary of the coronation. The session of the Legislative Body was also about to open. It was necessary that, in the interval which divided the agitation of which I have just spoken from the day on which the act of divorce was to be signed, the Empress should be present at all the ceremonies, all the fêtes; that she should appear before immense crowds, while silence alone could bring some consolation for her woes; it was necessary that she should cover her face with rouge in order to conceal her pallor and the ravages of a month spent in torments and in tears. What tortures! and how she must have cursed that elevation of which nothing now remained to her but its constraints!

On the 3d of December, Their Majesties went to Notre-Dame. A *Te Deum* was chanted, after which the imperial cortège took up its march toward the

palace of the Legislative Body, and the opening of the session took place with unusual magnificence. The Emperor took his seat amid inexpressible enthusiasm; never, perhaps, had his appearance called forth such storms of applause. For an instant the Empress was less sad; she seemed to enjoy these evidences of affection for him who was about to cease to be her husband; but when he began speaking she relapsed into her painful reflections.

It was nearly five o'clock when the cortège re-entered the Tuileries. The imperial banquet was to be at half-past seven. In the interval there was a reception of ambassadors, after which the guests went into the gallery of Diana.

At the banquet the Emperor wore his coronation costume and a plumed hat, which he never laid aside for an instant. He ate more than usual, in spite of the anxiety that seemed to agitate him; he looked all around and behind him, and was constantly making the grand chamberlain stoop down to receive an order that he never gave. The Empress sat opposite him, in the richest costume, a robe wrought in gold wire, covered with diamonds, but her face showed still more suffering than in the morning.

On the Emperor's right sat the King of Saxony, in a white uniform with red lapels and collar, richly embroidered in silver. He wore a false queue of prodigious length.

Beside the King of Saxony was the King of Westphalia, Jérôme Bonaparte, in a tunic of white satin and a belt loaded with pearls and diamonds which came almost up to his arms. His neck was bare and white; he had no whiskers and very little beard; a collarette of magnificent lace falling back over his shoulders, and a toque of black velvet adorned with white feathers completed this costume, the freshest and most gallant in the world. Next came the King of Würtemberg, with his enormous paunch which kept him away back from the table, and then the King of Naples in a dress so rich that it was almost extravagant, covered with crosses and stars, and playing with his fork without eating or drinking.

On the right of the Empress was the Empress-mother, the Queen of Westphalia, the Princess Borghese and Queen Hortense, pale like the Empress, but rendered more beautiful by sadness; her face was in remarkable contrast with that of the Princess Pauline, who never, perhaps, had seemed gayer than on that day. The toilet of the Princess Pauline was extraordinarily studied, but it did not enhance the charms of her person nearly as well as the simple but elegant dress of the Queen of Holland.

The next day there was a magnificent fête at the Hôtel-de-Ville, at which the Empress displayed her usual grace and kindliness. This was the last time she ever appeared in grand ceremony.

Some days after all these rejoicings, the Viceroy of Italy, Eugène de Beauharnais, arrived. He learned from the Empress's own mouth the terrible measure which circumstances were about to render necessary. This confidence overwhelmed him; troubled and despairing, he went to His Majesty, and as he could not believe what he had just heard, he asked the Emperor if it were true that the divorce must take place. The Emperor made a sign in the affirmative, and held out his hand to his adopted son, with a sorrowful expression. "Sire, permit me to leave you." "How?"—"Yes, Sire; the son of her who is no longer Empress cannot remain Viceroy; I will follow my mother in her retreat and console her." "Thou wilt leave me, Eugène? thou! And knowest thou not how imperative are the reasons which compel me to such a step? And if I obtain him, that son, the object of my dearest wishes, that son so necessary to me, who will take my place near him when I shall be absent? who will act as a father to him if I die? who will bring him up? who will make a man of him?" There were tears in the Emperor's eyes as he uttered these last words; again he took the hand of Prince Eugène, and drawing him to his breast, he embraced him tenderly. I could not hear the close of this interesting conversation

At last the fatal day arrived; it was the 16th of December. The imperial family had reassembled in extremely ceremonious costumes, when the

Empress entered, in a very simple white robe without the least ornament: she was pale but calm, and leaned on the arm of Queen Hortense, who was as pale and much more affected than her august mother. Prince de Beauharnais was standing beside the Emperor, his arms crossed, and trembling so violently that he seemed likely to fall at any moment. When the Empress had entered, Count Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angély read aloud the act of separation.

This reading was listened to in profound silence; every face was expressive of profound anxiety; the Empress seemed more calm than the others, although her cheeks were constantly furrowed with tears. She sat in an armchair in the middle of the salon, her elbow resting on a table; Queen Hortense stood behind her, sobbing. The reading of the act finished, the Empress rose, dried her eyes, and in a voice that was almost firm pronounced the words of adhesion; then she sat down again in her armchair, took a pen from the hands of M. Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angély, and signed. Afterwards she withdrew, still supported by Queen Hortense. Prince Eugène went out at the same moment through the study, and his strength failing him, he fell down unconscious between the two doors. The usher of the study raised him and put him in charge of his aides-de-camp, who lavished on him all the attentions required by so painful a position.

During this terrible ceremony, the Emperor did

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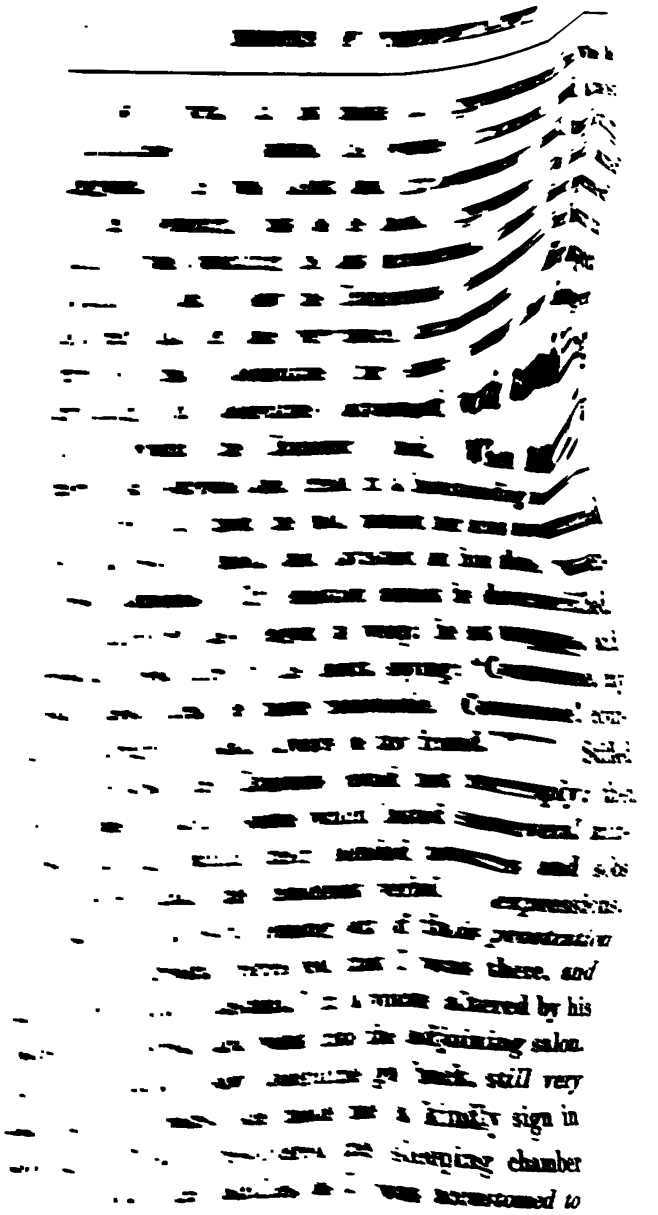

THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE IN THE PARK AT MALMAISON

not say a word, did not make a gesture; he was as motionless as a statue, his eyes fixed and almost haggard. He was silent and gloomy all day long. In the evening, just as he had gone to bed, and while I was awaiting his last orders, the door opened suddenly, and I saw the Empress enter, her hair in disorder and her face very much drawn. Her aspect terrified me. Josephine (for she was no longer anything but Josephine) advanced with trembling steps toward the Emperor's bed. When nearly there, she stopped and cried in a heartrending manner. She fell upon the bed, passed her arms around His Majesty's neck, and lavished on him the tenderest caresses. My emotion cannot be described. The Emperor also began to weep; he sat up, and pressed Josephine to his heart, saying: "Come, my good Josephine, be more reasonable. Come! courage, courage; I shall always be thy friend." Stifled by her sobs, the Empress could not reply; then there was a silent scene which lasted several minutes, during which their blended tears and sobs told more than the tenderest verbal expressions. At last His Majesty, coming out of this prostration as from a dream, perceived that I was there, and said: "Go out, Constant," in a voice altered by his tears. I obeyed, and went into the adjoining salon. An hour later, I saw Josephine go back, still very sad, still in tears; she made me a kindly sign in passing. Then I re-entered the sleeping chamber to fetch away the candles, as I was accustomed to

THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE IN THE PARK AT MALMAISON

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do every evening. The Emperor was as silent as the grave, and so buried in his bed that it was impossible for me to see his face.

The next morning, when I went into the Emperor's chamber, he did not say a word to me concerning the visit of the Empress, but I found him suffering and depressed. Some badly stifled sighs issued from his breast; he did not speak while his toilet was being made, and as soon as it was over he went into his cabinet. It was on that day that Josephine was to leave the Tuileries and go to Malmaison. All those whose duties did not detain them elsewhere were assembled under the vestibule to see once more this dethroned Empress whom all hearts followed into her exile. We looked at each other without daring to speak. Josephine appeared, closely veiled, one arm over the shoulder of one of her ladies, and the other holding a handkerchief to her eyes. There was a totally indescribable chorus of lamentations when this adored woman crossed the short space which separated her from her carriage. She got into it without casting a last look at the palace she was quitting forever. The blinds were instantly pulled down, and the horses went off like lightning. Some hours later, the Emperor departed for Versailles.

CHAPTER XII

Anecdotes anterior to the Emperor's second marriage — The Empress Josephine's jealousy of Madame Gazani — Interposition of the Emperor — Feminine conventicle surprised by the Emperor — A milliner sent to the Bicêtre — Great scandal — The Emperor's indifference — Hardihood of a man-milliner — The Emperor censured to his face — Constant's fear — Precipitate retreat — The Emperor wishes to make Constant write from his dictation — Constant's refusal — Constant granted a special permission to hunt — The Emperor's preference for Louis XVI. guns — Louis XVI. an excellent gunsmith — Napoleon's opinion of Louis XVI. — Diplomatic breakfasts — The salon and the family portraits — Provincial prudence — Fortunate result of a petition presented by Constant on behalf of General Lemarrois — The disgrace of one of Constant's uncles involuntarily caused by Marshal Bessières — The Marshal's reparation.

THE marriage of His Majesty with the Archduchess Marie-Louise was the first step of the Emperor in a new career. He flattered himself that it would be as glorious as that he had already traversed; it was quite the reverse. Before beginning the recital of what I have to say about the events of the year 1810, I will set down here certain matters, preserved in fragmentary notes, and which, though I cannot assign them a very precise date, nevertheless belong to a period anterior to that at which I have arrived.

The Empress Josephine had long been jealous of one of her readers, Madame Gazani, and treated her with coolness. The latter complained to the Emperor, who spoke of it to Josephine, urging her to be more kindly toward her reader, whose attachment to her person deserved better treatment, and adding that she was wrong in supposing that there might still be even the slightest connection between Madame and himself. Although not convinced of the truth of this last assertion, the Empress had nevertheless ceased to avoid Madame Gazani, when one morning the Emperor, who seemed to fear lest the fair Genoese might regain some influence over him, came abruptly into the apartment of the Empress, saying: "I don't want to see Madame Gazani here again; she must return to Italy." This time it was the good Josephine who undertook the defence of her reader. She said to His Majesty: "You know very well, my friend, that the best means you have of delivering yourself from Madame Gazani's presence is to leave her with me. Let me keep her. We will weep together; she and I understand each other well."

From that moment the Empress was in reality extremely kind to Madame Gazani, who accompanied her to Malmaison and Navarre. She treated her all the better because she believed her to be suffering on account of the Emperor's inconstancy. For my part, I have always doubted the sincerity of Madame Gazani's attachment for the Emperor.

Her self-love might have suffered when she saw herself neglected, but she easily found consolation amidst the homage and adoration which naturally surround so pretty a woman.

In mentioning the name of the Empress Josephine, I am reminded of two anecdotes which the Emperor himself took pleasure in relating. The outrageous waste that went on in the household of the Empress was a constant source of annoyance to him, and he had forbidden certain purveyors to enter her door, knowing by experience their proneness to abuse her too easy confidence.

One morning, having entered the apartment of the Empress without being expected, he found there several ladies who formed the secret council of the toilet, and a celebrated milliner, who was making an official report on the costliest and most sought-for novelties. She was one of the very persons whom he had strictly forbidden to enter the palace, and he did not expect to find her there. Still, he made no fuss, and Josephine, who knew him better than any one else, was the only one who comprehended the irony of his glance when he withdrew, saying: "Go on, ladies; I am sorry to have disturbed you." The milliner, much astonished at not having been put rudely out of doors, made haste to retire. But on reaching the last step of the staircase leading to Her Majesty's apartments she was accosted by an agent of the police, who invited her, with all possible politeness, to enter a cab which

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was waiting in the court of the Carrousel. It was of no use for her to protest that she preferred to depart on foot; the agent, who had received precise instructions, seized her arm in a fashion which obviated all necessity for a reply. She had to obey, and to take the road to the Bicêtre along with this sorry companion.

News came to the Emperor that this arrest had created a great scandal all over Paris, that he was loudly accused of wishing to restore the Bastille, that many persons had been to see and condole with the captive, and that a file of carriages stood in line before the door of the Bicêtre prison. His Majesty disregarded this, but was greatly amused by the interest excited, as he said, by a maker of pompons. Another time, speaking on the same subject, he said: "I shall allow these gossips, who are so proud of ruining themselves for chiffons, to chatter as much as they please. But I want some one to make that old Jewess understand that I had her put *indoors* because she had forgotten that I put her out of doors."

Another celebrated milliner also excited the surprise and anger of His Majesty by some observations which not a person in France with the exception of this man would have had the hardihood to make. The Emperor, as I have already said, was accustomed to settle his household accounts at the end of every month; he found the bill of the milliner in question exorbitant, and told me to send for him.

I did so; in less than ten minutes he came, and I introduced him into the chamber of His Majesty, who was at his toilet. "Monsieur," remarked the Emperor, who had the man's bill before him, "your prices are foolish, more foolish, if that is possible, than the ninnies and dunces who fancy they have need of your industry. Reduce that bill for me in a reasonable way, or I will undertake the reduction myself." The merchant, who held a duplicate of his bill in his hand, began to justify, article by article, the price of his goods, and concluded this tolerably long enumeration by expressing a sort of surprise and regret that the sum total should not have been greater. The Emperor, whom I was dressing while all this twaddle went on, could hardly restrain his impatience, and I already foresaw that this singular scene might have a disagreeable ending, when the man-milliner capped the climax by permitting himself to remark to His Majesty that the sum he allotted for the toilet of the Empress was insufficient, and that there were simple *bourgeois* who expended more than that. I own that I trembled for the shoulders of this imprudent person at this last impertinence, and anxiously watched the Emperor's movements. However he contented himself with crumpling in his hand the bill of the audacious milliner, and with arms crossed on his breast, he made two steps toward him, saying only the one word: *Really!* with such an accent and such a look that the man rushed to the door and

took to his heels without waiting for his settlement.

The Emperor could not endure my going to a distance from the château, and wanted to know that I was within reach even when my work was done and he had no need of me. I do not know whether it was with the intention of keeping me near him that His Majesty sometimes desired me to do copying for him. Sometimes, also, the Emperor, wishing to have notes taken while he was in bed or in his bath, would say to me: "Constant, take a pen and write." But I always refused, and went to summon M. de Menneval. I have already related how it was that the misfortunes of the Revolution had caused my primary instruction to be less carefully attended to than it should have been. But had I been as well taught as I am the reverse, I doubt very much whether I could ever have been induced to write from the Emperor's dictation. Assuredly it was not an easy task to fulfil that office. It required great practice. He talked fast, all in a breath, made no pauses, and was impatient if he were called on to repeat.

In order to have me always at his disposal, the Emperor gave me leave to hunt in the park of Saint-Cloud. His Majesty had been so kind as to notice that I was very fond of hunting, and in granting me this privilege he deigned to tell me that he was glad to have hit upon this means of reconciling my pleasure with his convenience. I was the only

person who had permission to hunt in the park. At the same time the Emperor made me a present of a superb double-barrelled gun which had been given him at Liège, and which I have still in my possession. His Majesty did not like double-barrelled guns for his own use, but availed himself of some small single-barrelled ones which had belonged to Louis XVI., and on which that monarch, an excellent gunsmith, was said to have worked with his own hands.

The sight of his guns often led the Emperor to speak of Louis XVI., and he never did so without feeling and expressing respect and pity for him. "That unfortunate prince," said the Emperor, "was good, wise, and learned. At another epoch he would have been an excellent king, but he was good for nothing in a time of revolution. He lacked resolution and firmness, and could not resist either the follies of the court or the insolence of the Jacobins. The courtiers threw him to the Jacobins, who conducted him to the scaffold. In his place I would have mounted a horse, and with a few concessions on one side and a few blows of the whip on the other, I would have restored everything to order."

When the diplomatic corps came to salute the Emperor at Saint-Cloud (and the same usage existed for the Tuileries), tea, coffee, chocolate, or whatever these gentlemen asked for, was served in the salon of ambassadors. M. Colin, the chief

steward, was present at this breakfast, which was put on the table by the apartment waiters.

At Saint-Cloud there was a salon that the Emperor was very fond of; it opened on a fine alley of chestnut trees in the closed park, where he could walk at all times without being seen. This apartment was hung with full-length life-size portraits of all the princesses of the imperial family; it was called the family salon.

Their Highnesses were standing, surrounded by their children; the Queen of Westphalia alone was sitting, because the upper portion of her body was very fine, as I have said before, but the rest of it less graceful. Her Majesty the Queen of Naples was represented with her four children; Queen Hortense with only one, the eldest of her living sons; the Queen of Spain with her two daughters; the Princess Elisa with hers, dressed like a boy; the Vice-queen alone, as she had no children at that epoch; the Princess Pauline was likewise alone.

During a sojourn at Saint-Cloud, I received a visit from a distant cousin whom I had not seen for many years. All he had heard of the luxury that surrounded the Emperor, and of the magnificence of the court, excited his curiosity to the utmost point. I took pleasure in satisfying it; he was wonder-stricken at every step. One evening, when there was a play at the château, I conducted him to my box, which was on the level of the pit and near it. The spectacle afforded by the theatre when it was

filled enchanted my relative. I had to name every personage, for his indefatigable curiosity passed them all in review, one after the other. It was not long before the Emperor's marriage with the Archduchess of Austria, and the court was more brilliant than ever. I pointed out to my cousin successively Their Majesties, the King of Bavaria, the King and Queen of Westphalia, the King and Queen of Naples, the Queen of Holland, Their Highnesses the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, the Prince and Princess Borghese, the Princess of Baden, the Grand Duke of Wurtzburg, etc., without reckoning all the dignitaries, princes, marshals, and ambassadors, of whom the hall was full. My cousin was in ecstasy, and felt taller by a foot on finding himself included in this gilded multitude. Hence he paid no attention to the play; the interior of the hall interested him far more than what was passing on the stage, and when we left the theatre he could not tell me what piece had been played. His enthusiasm, however, did not carry him so far as to make him forget the stories he had heard in his own province concerning the incredible skill of the pickpockets of the capital, and the warnings given him on that head. In our excursions, at the play, or at any sort of assembly, my cousin guarded with anxious solicitude his watch, his purse, and his handkerchief. His habitual prudence did not desert him at the court theatre. Just as we were leaving our box to mingle with the brilliant throng coming from the pit and

descending from the boxes, he said to me with the greatest coòlness, putting his hand over the chain and seals of his watch: "*After all, it is well to take precautions. We don't know everybody here.*"

At the time of his marriage, the Emperor was still more overwhelmed than usual with petitions, and he granted, as I shall relate further on, a great number of favors and pardons.

All the petitions presented to the Emperor were handed by him to the aide-de-camp on duty, who took them to His Majesty's cabinet, where orders were given to render him an account of them the following day. Perhaps, ten times in all, I may have found some in the Emperor's pockets, which I always carefully examined; when there were any there, it was simply because the aide-de-camp was not at hand when they were presented. It is not true then, though it has been said and printed, that the Emperor deposited in a special pocket, which was called the *good pocket*, the requests he intended to grant even without looking at them; all petitions that were worth the trouble were replied to. I have presented a great many to His Majesty; he never put them in his pocket, and nearly always I was lucky enough to find them successful. I must, however, except several which I presented for the brothers Cerf-Berr, who claimed payment for supplies furnished to the armies of the Republic; to them the Emperor was always inflexible. People said this was because MM. Cerf-Berr had refused General

Bonaparte a sum he had need of at the time of the Italian campaign.

These gentlemen had greatly interested me, and I several times presented their petitions to the Emperor. In spite of the pains I took never to do so unless I saw that he was in a cheerful humor, I received no response. Nevertheless, I continued to offer him petition on petition, though I noticed that whenever he glanced at them he was always vexed. At last, one morning, the toilet being ended, I handed him as usual his gloves, handkerchief, and snuff-box, and again I added this unlucky paper. His Majesty went into his study, and I remained in the chamber, where I had various matters to attend to. I was busy with them when I saw the Emperor returning with a paper in his hand. He said to me: "Look here, Constant, read this; you will see they are misleading you. The government owes nothing to the brothers Cerf-Berr. Don't mention them to me again; they are Arabs." I glanced at the paper, reading a few words through obedience. I comprehended little or nothing of it, but I could not but be certain from that moment that he would never decide in favor of these gentlemen. I was distressed about it, and knowing them to be unfortunate, I offered them services which they refused. In spite of my failure to succeed, MM. Cerf-Berr were convinced of the zeal with which I had striven for justice toward them, and thanked me for it. Every time that I presented a

petition to the Emperor, I saw M. de Menneval, whom I would ask to concern himself about it; he was extremely obliging, and would kindly tell me whether or not my request was likely to be granted. He had said to me, apropos of that of MM. Cerf-Berr, that he did not believe the Emperor would ever allow the justice of it.

And in fact, this once wealthy family, which had lost an immense patrimony in advances made to the Directory, has never obtained the liquidation it applied for, and which was confided to a man of great probity, but perhaps rather too well disposed to justify the nickname[1] given him at this period.

Madame Théodore Cerf-Berr, on my invitation, had come several times with her children, both to Rambouillet and Saint-Cloud, to implore justice from the Emperor. This worthy mother, whom nothing rebuffed, came once more to Compiègne with her eldest daughter in October, 1811. She waited for the Emperor in the forest, and having thrown herself amongst the horses, she succeeded in handing him her petition; but what came of it this time? Madame and Mademoiselle Cerf-Berr had scarcely re-entered their hotel when an officer of gendarmerie came and ordered them to follow him. He made them get into a wretched cart, filled with straw, and conducted them to the prefecture of

[1] M. de Fermon, counsellor of state, and director of the general liquidation; people usually called him *Fermons-la-Caisse* ("let us shut the cash-box").

police, in Paris, under the escort of two gendarmes. There they were obliged to sign an agreement never again to present themselves before the Emperor, and on these conditions they were restored to liberty.

An occasion in which my advances were more successful presented itself about this time. General Lemarrois, one of the oldest of His Majesty's aides-de-camp, a man of tried bravery, whose excellent qualities had gained all hearts, was for awhile in disgrace with the Emperor, and attempted several times to obtain an audience; but whether his request were not presented, or His Majesty was disinclined to grant it, at all events M. Lemarrois heard nothing from it. To know what he ought to think about it, it occurred to him to address himself to me, begging me to present his petition at an opportune moment. I was so happy as to succeed. M. the Count Lemarrois obtained his audience and came away satisfied, and it was not long after that he was appointed governor of Magdeburg.

The Emperor was sometimes very absent-minded, and often forgot what he had done with the petitions which were returned to him when they were left in his coats. I used to take them to His Majesty's study and hand them to M. Menneval and M. Fain. It happened occasionally that the Emperor would give me papers to lock up for him. I would then put them in a dressing-case to which I had the only key. One day there was a great commotion in the interior apartments over a paper

which was missing. This is how it happened. Near the cabinet of the Emperor, where the secretaries were, was a little salon, with a bureau on which notes or petitions were frequently deposited. It was in this salon that the cabinet usher usually remained, and the Emperor was accustomed to go in there in order to talk confidentially with persons whose conversation must not be overheard, even by His Majesty's secretaries. When the Emperor entered this salon, the usher withdrew, and waited at the exterior door. The responsibility for anything that might be taken from this apartment, which was never opened but by His Majesty's express orders, rested therefore upon him.

Marshal Bessières had presented some days before a request for advancement for an army colonel, and given it his most earnest support. One morning the Marshal entered the little salon of which I have just spoken, and finding on the bureau his recommendatory note, he saw nothing out of the way in taking it, and he carried it away with him, without the fact being perceived by my wife's uncle, who was on duty. A few hours later, the Emperor wished to re-read this petition. He was sure he had laid it down in the little salon; it could no longer be found there; it followed that the usher must have allowed some one to enter without His Majesty's orders. It was diligently hunted for in the chamber and cabinet of the Emperor and the apartments of the Empress, but at last it became

necessary to tell His Majesty that the search had been in vain. Then the Emperor fell into one of those terrible, but luckily infrequent, rages which upset the whole château. The poor usher was ordered never to come within sight of him again. Finally Marshal Bessières, discovering what it was all about, came and accused himself. The Emperor quieted down, the usher returned to favor, and all was forgotten. But everybody took greater pains than ever that nothing should be disturbed, and that the Emperor should always find at his hand the papers he had need of.

The Emperor could not endure to have any person brought into his apartments or those of Her Majesty the Empress without his permission. As far as the servants were concerned, this was the only fault for which no pardon could be expected. I don't recall when it was that the wife of one of the palace porters allowed a lover that she had to enter the apartments of the Empress. This wretch, without the knowledge of his imprudent mistress, took an impression in soft wax of the lock of one of the jewel-cases, the one I have already mentioned as having belonged to Queen Marie-Antoinette. By means of a false key made from this impression he one day succeeded in stealing various jewels. The police soon discovered the thief, who was punished as he deserved. But another person was also punished who certainly did not deserve it; the poor husband lost his place.

CHAPTER XIII

Different opinions at the château concerning the Emperor's marriage — Mistaken conjectures — Constant commissioned to renew His Majesty's wardrobe — His Majesty receives the portrait of Marie-Louise — Souvenir of the Military School — Lesson in waltzing given to the Emperor by the Princess Stéphanie — Prince de Neufchâtel's departure for Vienna — Marriage by proxy — Formation of the household of the Empress — The wedding presents of the Empress — The Emperor's gaiety — The slipper of good omen — Queen Caroline at fault with regard to the new Empress — Disappointed ambition — The Empress deprived of her governess — Resentment of Marie-Louise against Queen Caroline — Correspondence of Their Majesties — The Emperor sends his game to the Empress — Severity of the Duc de Vicenza — Acts of beneficence — The coquetry of glory — Meeting of Their Imperial Majesties — Momentary ill-temper — Amiability of Marie-Louise.

THE Emperor seemed greatly preoccupied after his divorce from the Empress Josephine. It was known that he intended to remarry, and at the château all of His Majesty's attendants were talking of this future marriage. But not one of our conjectures concerning the princess destined to share the imperial crown turned out to be correct. Some had spoken of a Russian princess, others said the Emperor would marry none but a Frenchwoman; not one had dreamed of an Austrian archduchess. When the marriage had been decided on, nothing

was spoken of at court but the youth, grace, and native kindliness of the new Empress. The Emperor seemed more cheerful and took better care of himself. He charged me to renew his wardrobe, and I ordered closer-fitting and more fashionable coats for him. His Majesty sat for his portrait, which was taken to Marie-Louise by the Prince de Neufchâtel. At the same time the Emperor received that of his youthful bride, and seemed enchanted with it.

The Emperor took more pains to please Marie-Louise than he had ever done for any other woman. One day when he was alone with Queen Hortense and the Princess Stéphanie, the latter mischievously inquired if he knew how to waltz. His Majesty replied that he had never been able to get beyond the first lesson, and that after two or three turns he had been seized by a giddiness which prevented his continuing. "When I was at the Military School," added the Emperor, "I tried I don't know how many times to overcome the vertigo occasioned by waltzing, without being able to succeed. Our dancing master had advised us, when practising, to take a chair in our arms instead of a lady. I never failed to fall down with the chair which I was squeezing affectionately, and to break it. The chairs in my room, and those of two or three of my comrades, disappeared one after another." This story, told in the gayest possible style by His Majesty, excited bursts of laughter from both princesses.

When their hilarity had calmed down a bit, the Princess Stéphanie returned to the charge and said to the Emperor: "It is really too bad that Your Majesty does not know how to waltz: the Germans are crazy about waltzing, and the Empress must necessarily share the tastes of her compatriots. She cannot have any partner but the Emperor, and hence she will be deprived of a great pleasure through Your Majesty's fault." "You are right," returned the Emperor. "Very well! give me a lesson. You shall have a specimen of my *savoir-faire*." Thereupon he rose, and waltzed a few steps with the Princess Stéphanie, himself humming the air of *The Queen of Prussia*. But he could not take more than two or three turns, and even these in such an awkward manner as to redouble the mirth of these ladies. The Princess of Baden stopped short, saying: "Sire, that is enough to convince me that you will never be anything but a bad pupil. You are made to give lessons, but not to receive them."

In the early days of March, the Prince de Neufchâtel set out for Vienna, to make the official demand for the Empress. The Archduke Charles espoused the Archduchess Marie-Louise by proxy for the Emperor, and she started for France without delay. The little town of Braunau, on the frontier of Austria and Bavaria, had been selected for the surrender of the Empress, and the Strasburg road was soon thronged with carriages taking her new

household thither. Here is the list of those persons whom it originally included:

Prince Aldobrandini Borghese, first equerry, replacing General Ordener, appointed governor of the château of Compiègne; Count de Beauharnais, chevalier of honor.

Lady of honor, Madame de Montebello; lady of the bedchamber, Madame the Countess de Luçay.

Ladies of the palace, Mesdames the Duchesses de Bassano and de Rovigo, and Mesdames the Countesses de Montmorency, de Mortemart, de Talhouet, de Lauriston, Duchâtel, de Bouillé, de Montalivet, de Perron, de Lascaris, de Noailles, de Brignolle, de Gentile, and de Canizy (since Duchesse de Vicenza).

The majority of these ladies had passed from the household of the Empress Josephine into that of the Empress Marie-Louise.

The Emperor wished to see for himself whether the *corbeille* and the nuptial presents he intended for his new spouse were worthy of her and of him. All of the apparel, the linen, etc., was brought to the Tuileries, displayed before him, and packed up in his presence. Nothing equalled their costliness but their elegance and good taste. The purveyors and artisans of Paris had worked from measures and models forwarded from Vienna. When these were shown to the Emperor, he picked up one of the shoes, which were remarkably small, and tapping my cheek with it by way of a caress, said to me:

"Constant, this shoe bodes well. Have you seen many feet like that? One could take it in his hand!"

Her Majesty the Queen of Naples had been despatched to Braunau by the Emperor to receive the Empress. Queen Caroline, of whom the Emperor said that she was a man among her sisters, while Prince Joseph was a woman among his brothers, was at fault, so people said, about the timidity of the Empress Marie-Louise, which she mistook for weakness; she thought she had only to speak to make her young sister-in-law eager to obey. On arriving at Braunau, and after the formal delivery, the Empress had dismissed her entire Austrian household, retaining only her governess, Madame de Lajanski, who had educated her and who never left her. Etiquette required, however, that the new household of the Empress should be entirely French; moreover, the Emperor's orders were precise on this head. I do not know whether it is true, as has somewhere been said, that the Empress had asked and obtained the Emperor's permission to have her governess with her for a year. However that may be, the Queen of Naples thought it her own interest to banish a person whose influence over the mind of the Empress she dreaded. The ladies of the imperial household, themselves anxious to get rid of Madame de Lajanski's rivalry, tried to excite still farther the jealousy of Her Imperial Highness. A positive order from the Emperor was

asked for, and Madame de Lajanski was sent back from Munich to Vienna. The Empress obeyed without a murmur; but, knowing from what hand the blow proceeded, she retained a deep resentment against Her Majesty the Queen of Naples.

The Empress journeyed only by short stages, and a fête attended her in each city through which she passed. Every day the Emperor sent her a letter written by his own hand, and she answered them regularly. The first letters of the Empress were very short, and probably rather cool, for the Emperor said nothing about them. But the others grew longer and warmer by degrees, and the Emperor read them with transports of pleasure. He awaited their arrival with the impatience of a twenty-year-old lover, and never found the couriers quick enough, although they rode their horses to death.

The Emperor came in one day from the chase carrying in his hand a brace of pheasants which he had shot himself, and followed by several footmen laden with the rarest and most beautiful flowers from the greenhouses of Saint-Cloud. He wrote a note, called for his first page, and said to him: "Be ready in ten minutes to get into a carriage. You will find this parcel there, which you will deliver to Her Majesty the Empress with your own hand, along with this letter. And above all, don't spare the horses; go like a page, and don't be afraid. M. the Duc de Vicenza will have nothing to say to you." The youth asked nothing better than to obey

His Majesty. Relying on this authorization, he was lavish in tips to the postilions, and in twenty-four hours was in Strasburg and had acquitted himself of his commission.

I do not know whether the grand equerry scolded him when he came back, but if there were occasion for scolding, he would certainly have received it, notwithstanding the assurance given him by the Emperor.

The Duc de Vicenza had organized and was directing admirably the service of the stables, where nothing was done but by his will, which was of the most absolute sort. Even the Emperor found it difficult to change anything which the grand equerry had commanded. It happened one day, for instance, that His Majesty, who was on his way to Fontainebleau, and in great haste to arrive there, ordered the groom whose business it was to regulate the pace to go faster. The latter transmitted the order to the Duc de Vicenza, whose carriage preceded the Emperor's. The grand equerry paying no heed to it, the Emperor began to swear, and shouted through the door to the groom: "Take my carriage on ahead, since the first one will not march." The grooms and postilions were about to carry out this order, when the grand equerry in his turn thrust his head out of the door, and shouted: "Trot, f——; the first one that gallops I will dismiss when we get there." They knew very well that he would keep his word, so nobody dared to pass him, and it was

his carriage which continued to set the pace. On arriving at Fontainebleau, the Emperor demanded an explanation of his conduct from the Duc de Vicenza. "Sire," he responded, "when you pare my nails a little shorter for your stable expenses, you may drive your horses to death at your ease."

The Emperor was incessantly cursing the ceremonial and the fêtes which delayed the arrival of his young bride. A camp had been formed near Soissons for the reception of the Empress. The Emperor was at Compiègne, where he issued a decree containing several acts of beneficence and indulgence on the occasion of his marriage: the liberation of condemned persons, the payment of debts for child-nursing, the marriage of six soldiers with dowries furnished by the Emperor, amnesties, institution of majorats, etc. When His Majesty knew the Empress was within ten leagues of Soissons, he could no longer restrain his impatience, and shouting to me with all his lungs: "Ohé! oh! Constant; order a carriage without a livery, and come and dress me." The Emperor wished to take the Empress by surprise, and present himself without being announced, and he laughed like a child at the effect this interview must produce. His toilet was made with more exquisite cleanliness, if that were possible, than usual, and, with the coquetry of glory, he put on the gray greatcoat which he had worn at Wagram.

Thus prepared, His Majesty entered a carriage

with the King of Naples. How the meeting of Their Majesties took place is known. In the little village of Courcelles, the Emperor met the last courier, who was only a few minutes in advance of the Empress. It was raining in torrents, and, for the sake of shelter, the Emperor alighted under the porch of the village church. When the carriage of the Empress came near, the Emperor made a sign to the postilions to stop. The equerry who rode beside it, perceiving him, made haste to lower the step and announce His Majesty, who was considerably displeased, and said to him: "Didn't you see that I signed you to be silent?" But this little spurt of ill-humor vanished like a flash. The Emperor threw his arms about the neck of Marie-Louise, who had a portrait of her husband in her hand, and said to him with a charming smile, looking alternately at the Emperor and his likeness: "Your portrait does not flatter you." A magnificent supper had been prepared at Soissons for the Empress and her cortège, but the Emperor ordered them to go on at once at Compiègne, without regard for the appetites of the officers and ladies of Her Majesty's suite.

CHAPTER XIV

Arrival of Their Majesties at Compiègne — The Emperor's jealousy — Wrong done to M. de Beauharnais by the Emperor — Forgetfulness of ceremony — Coquetry of the Emperor — First nocturnal visit to Her Majesty the Empress — The Emperor's opinion of German women — The Emperor's gaiety — His continual attentions to Marie-Louise — Portrait of the Empress Marie-Louise — The Empress's instructions — Comparison between the two wives of the Emperor — Differences and resemblances between the two empresses — The *Memorial of Saint-Helena* — The Emperor's partiality in favor of his second wife — Economy of the Empress Marie-Louise — Defective taste — The Emperor an excellent husband — The Emperor's remarks contradicted by Constant — Souvenirs of Josephine not effaced by Marie-Louise — Prejudices of Marie-Louise against her own household and that of the Emperor — Constant's return from the Russian campaign — Kindliness of the Emperor and Queen Hortense — Disdainful coolness of the Empress — Excessive kindliness of the Empress Josephine — The Emperor's watchfulness over the Empress — Severity toward her ladies.

THEIR Majesties having arrived at Compiègne, the Emperor presented his own hand to the Empress and conducted her to her apartment. He was unwilling that any other man should approach and touch his young bride before he did, and his jealousy on this point was so delicate that he had personally forbidden Senator de Beauharnais, chevalier of honor to the Empress, to offer his hand to

Her Imperial Majesty, although this was one of the privileges of his position. According to the programme, the Emperor was to leave the Empress and go to the chancellor's residence, to sleep, but he did nothing of the sort. After a long conversation with the Empress, he returned to his own room, undressed, perfumed himself with cologne water, and returned secretly to that of the Empress, clad merely in a dressing-gown.

The next morning at his toilet the Emperor asked me if any one had noticed the change he had made in the programme. At the risk of lying, I told him no. At that moment entered one of the Emperor's intimates who was unmarried. Pinching his ears, His Majesty said to him: "Marry a German, my dear fellow. They are the best women in the world; gentle, good, artless, and as fresh as roses." His Majesty's air of satisfaction made it very easy to see that he was making a portrait, and that it was not long since the painter had quitted the model. After certain cares given to his person, the Emperor returned to the Empress, and toward noon he had breakfast sent up for both of them, having it served near the bed, and by the Empress's women. He was charmingly gay all the remainder of the day. Having, contrary to his custom, made a second toilet for dinner, he put on the coat that had been made for him by the tailor of the King of Naples, but he would have none of it the next day, saying that it was decidedly too tight a fit.

As may be seen from the foregoing details, the Emperor loved his new spouse tenderly. He paid her continual attentions, and his whole conduct toward her was that of a very deeply smitten lover. At the same time, it is not true, as has been reported, that for three months he scarcely worked at all, to the great astonishment of his ministers. Work was not simply a duty with the Emperor; it was a necessity and a pleasure from which no other pleasure could divert him. In this circumstance as in any other, he was perfectly well able to harmonize the exigencies of his empire and his armies with his love for his charming wife.

The Empress Marie-Louise was barely nineteen years old at the epoch of her marriage. Her hair was light, her eyes blue and expressive, her bearing noble, and her figure imposing. Her hand and foot might have served as models; her whole person, in fine, breathed youth, health, and freshness. She was timid, and maintained a haughty reserve in presence of the court, but was said to be affectionate and friendly in private. It is certain that she was very loving with the Emperor, and devoted to all his wishes. In their first interview, the Emperor had asked her what parting instructions had been given her at Vienna. "To be yours," the Empress had responded, "and to obey you in all things." And she seemed to find no difficulty in complying with these instructions. For the rest, nothing could be less like the first Empress than the second. One

point alone excepted, — the evenness of their temper and their extreme complaisance for the Emperor, — the one was the exact opposite of the other, and (it must be owned) the Emperor often congratulated himself on this difference, in which he found piquancy and charm. He drew the following parallel himself between his two wives:

"The one (Josephine) was all art and graces; the other (Marie-Louise), innocence and simple nature. There was no moment in life in which the manners or habitudes of the first were not agreeable or attractive. It would have been impossible to find fault with her on that point; she studied how to produce none but advantageous impressions, and attained her object without allowing the study to become evident. All that art could devise to enhance attractions was put into service by her, but with such mystery that at best one could but suspect it. The second, on the contrary, did not even surmise that there was anything to be gained by innocent artifices. The one was always eluding the truth; her first impulse was a denial. The other knew nothing of dissimulation; all evasion was foreign to her. The first never asked for anything, but she owed in every direction. The second never hesitated to ask when she had nothing left, which was very seldom. She never took anything without feeling bound in conscience to pay for it at once. As for the rest, both of them were good, gentle, and greatly attached to their husband."

Such, or very nearly such, were the terms in which the Emperor spoke of the two empresses. It is evident that he wished the comparison to be advantageous to the second, and to this end he attributed to her qualities she did not possess, or at least curiously exaggerated those which she might have had.

The Emperor allowed Marie-Louise five hundred thousand francs for her toilet, but she seldom or never spent that sum. She had very little taste, and would have dressed herself ungracefully if she had not been well advised. The Emperor was present at her toilet on days when he desired it to be good. He made her try different ornaments, putting them himself on her head, neck, and arms, and always deciding for the magnificent. The Emperor was an excellent husband, and he proved it with both of his wives. He adored his son; as father and husband he might have served as a model to all his subjects. At the same time, whatever he may have said about it himself, I do not believe that he loved Marie-Louise as well as Josephine. The latter had a charm, a kindness, a spirit, a devotion which her husband the Emperor knew, and which he esteemed at its full worth. Marie-Louise was younger, but cold, and somewhat ungracious. I think she loved her husband, but she was reserved, not at all expansive; she could not make Josephine forgotten by those who had had the happiness of approaching her.

Notwithstanding the apparent submission with which she had dismissed her Austrian household, it

is certain that she entertained strong prejudices, not merely against her new one, but also against that of the Emperor. She never addressed a kindly word to those in personal attendance on the Emperor. I have seen her many times; but never was there a smile, a glance, a sign from her to signify that I was other than a stranger in her eyes. On returning from Russia, whence I did not arrive until after the Emperor, I lost no time in repairing to his room, where he expected me. I found His Majesty in the company of the Empress and Queen Hortense. The Emperor greatly compassionated the sufferings I had undergone, and said many flattering things which displayed his kindness toward me. The Queen, with that charming grace of which she is the only model since the death of her august mother, talked with me a long time, and in terms full of benevolence. The Empress alone kept silence. The Emperor said to her: "Louise, have you nothing to say to this poor Constant?" "I had not perceived him," replied the Empress. This answer was severe; for it was impossible that Her Majesty should not have *perceived* me. At that moment there was no one in the room excepting the Emperor, Queen Hortense, and me.

The Emperor took at once the greatest precautions that no person, above all, no man, should be able to approach the Empress except in the presence of witnesses. In the time of the Empress Josephine there had been four ladies whose sole employment

was to *announce* the persons who were received by Her Majesty. The excessive kindliness of Josephine prevented her from repressing the jealous pretensions of some members of her household; and thence ensued rivalries and squabbles without end between the ladies of the palace and the announcing ladies. The Emperor had been very much annoyed by these quarrels, and to avoid them for the future, he selected four new *dames d'annonce* for the Empress Marie-Louise, from among the ladies charged with the education of the daughters of members of the Legion of Honor, in the establishment of Écouen. The preference was at first given to the daughters or widows of generals, and the Emperor decided that the best pupils from that imperial establishment should thenceforward be entitled to all vacancies, and might merit them by good conduct. The number of these ladies having afterwards been increased to six, two pupils of Madame Campan were chosen. These six ladies afterwards changed their original appellation to that of first ladies of the Empress. But this change having dissatisfied the ladies of the palace and caused them to complain to the Emperor, the latter decided that the announcing ladies should take the title of *first chamberwomen*. Great complaints from the *dames d'annonce* in their turn: they pleaded their cause in person before the Emperor, and he gave them the title of *readers* to the Empress, in order to conciliate the requirements of the two belligerent parties.

The announcing ladies, or the first ladies, or the first chamberwomen, or the readers, as the reader may choose to call them, had six chambermaids under their orders, who never entered the room of the Empress unless summoned by the bell. These dressed the Empress, put on her shoes, and combed her hair. But the first six had nothing to do with the toilet except for the diamonds, which were in their special custody. Their principal, and almost their only, employment, was to be always at the heels of the Empress, whom they followed like her shadow. They came into her room before she got up, and never left her until after she had gone to bed. Then every door leading to her chamber was locked, with the exception of one that opened into a neighboring room containing the bed of whichever of these ladies was on duty. Even the Emperor could not enter his wife's room at night without passing through this chamber. With the exception of M. de Menneval, private secretary of Her Majesty, and M. Ballouhai, steward of her expenditures, no man was admitted to the private apartments of the Empress without an order from the Emperor. Even ladies, excepting the lady of honor and the lady of the bedchamber, were not received there but by special appointment with the Empress. The ladies of the interior were charged with the execution of these regulations, and were responsible for them. One of them was always present at the lessons taken by the Empress in music, drawing,

and embroidery. They wrote letters from her dictation or by her order.

The Emperor said he was unwilling that any man in the world should be able to boast of having been alone with the Empress for two minutes; and he one day very severely reprimanded the reader on duty, because she had remained at the further end of the salon while M. Biennais, the court jeweller, was showing Her Majesty the secrets of a set of pigeonholes which he had made for her. Another time the Emperor scolded because the lady on duty had not kept close beside the Empress while the latter was taking her music lesson from M. Paër.

Hence, it is not true, as has been claimed, that Leroy, the man-milliner, had been excluded from the palace for having presumed to tell the Empress that she had beautiful shoulders, while he was trying on a dress. M. Leroy had the robes of the Empress made in his establishment after a pattern that had been sent him. Neither he nor any one from there ever tried them on Her Majesty. The changes he had to make were pointed out to him by the chambermaids. It was the same with other tradespeople and purveyors, corset-makers, shoemakers, glove-makers, etc. Not one of them could see the Empress or speak with her in her private apartments.

CHAPTER XV

The religious ceremony of Their Majesties' marriage — The day after their marriage — Dazzling fêtes — The temples of Glory and of Hymen — Present of the city of Paris to the Empress — Cost of the toilet-service of the two empresses — Journey in the departments of the North — Souvenirs of Josephine — Triumph and isolation — Arrival at Antwerp — Coolness between the King of Holland and the Emperor — Outbursts of the Emperor — Some characteristic traits of Prince Louis — Sea-voyage to Flushing — Tempest — Danger incurred by the Emperor — Sufferings of His Majesty — The Empress's first riding lesson — Solicitude of the Emperor — Rapid progress — Liking of the Empress for balls and fêtes — Burning of Prince de Schwarzenberg's house — Fortunate presence of mind of the Emperor and the Viceroy of Italy — Napoleon's superstition — Abdication of the King of Holland — The Emperor's remark.

THE civil marriage of Their Majesties was celebrated at the palace of Saint-Cloud on Sunday, April 1, at two o'clock in the afternoon. The religious marriage took place in the grand gallery of the Louvre the following day. A rather singular circumstance was that the weather was fine at Saint-Cloud on Sunday evening, while the streets of Paris were inundated by heavy and continuous rain. On Monday it rained at Saint-Cloud, and the weather was magnificent at Paris, as if to detract nothing from the pomp of the procession and the brilliancy

of the marvellous illuminations in the evening. "The Emperor's star," said people in the language of the period, "has twice carried the day against the equinoctial winds."

On Monday evening, the city of Paris presented such a spectacle that one might have thought himself in an enchanted place. I have never seen such brilliant illuminations. It was a succession of magical decorations. Houses, hotels, palaces, churches, all were dazzling, even to the church towers, which seemed like stars or comets hung in air. The residences of the great dignitaries of the Empire, the ministers, the ambassadors of Austria and Russia, and that of the Duc d'Abrantès, vied with each other in splendor and good taste. Place Louis XV. presented an admirable spectacle. From the middle of this Place, surrounded by orange trees of flame, the eyes rolled alternately to the magnificent decoration of the Champs-Elysées, the Garde-Meuble, the temple of Glory, the Tuileries, and the Corps Législatif. The latter palace represented the temple of Hymen. The transparency of the pediment represented Peace uniting the august spouses. On either side of them were genii carrying bucklers on which were displayed the armorial bearings of the two empires; behind this group came magistrates, warriors, and the people, presenting them with crowns. At the two extremities of the transparency were the Seine and the Danube, surrounded with children, — an image of fecundity. The twelve columns of the

peristyle, and the flight of steps leading to it, were illuminated. The columns were united by chandeliers. The statues adorning the peristyle and perron were lighted up. The Louis XV. bridge, which conducted to this temple of Hymen, was itself an avenue whose double range of fires, colored lamps, obelisks, and its more than a hundred columns, each surmounted by a star and joined together by spiral garlands of colored lamps, were almost too insupportably brilliant to be looked at. The cupola of the dome of Sainte Geneviève was also magnificently illuminated. Each side of it was defined by a double row of lanterns. Between these were eagles, monograms in colored lamps, and fiery garlands depending from the torches of Hymen. The peristyle of the dome was lighted by chandeliers placed between the columns, and as the latter were not illuminated, the chandeliers seemed to be hanging in air. The lantern was all in fire, and the whole brilliant mass was surmounted by a tripod representing the altar of Hymen, whence escaped an immense flame produced by bituminous materials. At a great height above the platform of the observatory, an immense star, isolated from the platform, and caused to scintillate like a vast diamond by the variety of colored lamps which formed it, stood out against a black sky. The Senate house also attracted large crowds of sight-seers. But I have already lingered too long over this description of the marvellous sights that greeted the eye at every step.

The city of Paris presented Her Majesty the Empress with a toilet-service still more magnificent than that it had offered to the Empress Josephine. Everything was in silver-gilt, even to the armchair and the full-length dressing-glass. The designs for the different pieces of this truly admirable set of furniture had been made by the first artists, and the elegance and finish of the ornamentation surpassed even the richness of the metal.

Toward the end of April, Their Majesties visited the departments of the North together. This journey was a repetition of that which I had made in 1804, in the train of the Emperor; only, the Empress was not now the good and gracious Josephine. In passing through all these cities where I had seen her welcomed with so much enthusiasm, and whose good wishes and homage were now addressed to another sovereign; in revisiting the château of Lacken, Brussels, Antwerp, Boulogne, and many other places where I had seen Josephine passing in triumph, as Marie-Louise was doing now, I thought with sadness and regret of the isolation of the Emperor's first wife, and the anguish which could not fail to pursue her even in retirement when the story should arrive of the honors paid to her by whom she had been succeeded in the heart of the Emperor and on the imperial throne.

The King and Queen of Westphalia and Prince Eugène accompanied Their Majesties. At Antwerp we saw them launch a twenty-four-gun ship, which

was blessed by M. de Pradt, Archbishop of Malines, before it left the stocks. The King of Holland came to join the Emperor at Antwerp. There was a coolness between this prince and His Majesty, who had quite recently demanded from him the cession of a part of his dominions, and who soon after laid hands on all the rest. Nevertheless he came to Paris during the marriage festivities of the Emperor, who had even sent him to meet the Empress Marie-Louise; but the two brothers had not relinquished their natural distrust; and it must be admitted that that of King Louis was but too well founded. What seemed to me most singular in their altercations was that the Emperor, in his brother's absence, would fly into the greatest passions and utter the most violent threats against him, while if they were to have an interview, they greeted each other in an amicable and familiar way like two brothers. Apart, one was the Emperor of the French, and the other the King of Holland; together, they were, if I may be allowed so to express myself, nothing but Napoleon and Louis, companions and friends from infancy.

However, Prince Louis was habitually sad and melancholy; the contrarieties he experienced on the throne, where he had been placed in spite of himself, added to his domestic griefs, rendered him evidently unhappy; and all who knew him commiserated him most sincerely, for King Louis was an excellent master, a meritorious and an honest man. It has been said that when the Emperor had decreed

the reunion of Holland to France, King Louis resolved to defend himself to the last extremity in the city of Amsterdam, and to break the dikes and inundate the whole country in order to prevent the invasion of French troops. I do not know whether that is true; but from what I have seen of the character of this prince, I am very sure that, although he had sufficient personal courage to expose himself to all the chances of so desperate a step, his natural kindliness and humanity would have prevented him from carrying such a plan into execution.

At Middelburg the Emperor went aboard the *Charlemagne* to visit the mouths of the Scheldt, the port of the island of Flushing. During this excursion, we were assailed by a terrible squall. Three anchors were broken in succession. We sustained other damages, and incurred great danger. The Emperor was very sea-sick; he was constantly throwing himself on his bed, and making repeated efforts to vomit without being able to succeed, which rendered his condition still more distressing. Fortunately, I was not at all inconvenienced, and was therefore able to render him all the assistance which his case required. All the members of his suite were likewise ill. My uncle, who was the usher on duty, and consequently obliged to remain standing at the door of His Majesty's cabin, fell down every minute, and suffered horribly. During this torment, which lasted three days, the Emperor was boiling with impatience: "I think," said he, when we could

at last approach him, "that I would have made a rather indifferent admiral."

Shortly after our return from this journey, the Emperor wished Her Majesty the Empress to learn how to ride. She went to the riding-school of Saint-Cloud; several members of the household were in the tribune to see her take her first lesson. I was among them, and I saw the tender solicitude evinced by the Emperor for his young wife. She was mounted on a gentle and very well broken horse. The Emperor never let go her hand, and M. Jardin held the horse's bridle. At the first step it made, the Empress screamed with alarm; and the Emperor said to her: "Come on! Louise, be brave; what canst thou fear? Am I not here?" The lesson passed in encouragements on one side and frights on the other. The next day the Emperor ordered those who were in the tribunes to be sent away, because their presence intimidated the Empress. She soon got used to it, and ended by riding very well. She often rode in the park with her ladies of honor and Madame the Duchesse de Montebello, who also rode with grace. The Empress was followed by several ladies in an open carriage. Prince Aldobrandini, her equerry, never left her in these excursions.

The Empress was at the age when one has a fondness for balls and festivities, and the Emperor dreaded above all things that she should be bored. Hence diversions and entertainments abounded at

court and in the city. A fête offered to Their Majesties by Prince Schwarzenberg, the Austrian ambassador, had a frightful termination.

The Prince occupied the former hotel de Montesson, in the rue Chaussée d'Antin. For the purposes of his ball, he had added to the already existing apartments a vast hall and a wooden gallery, decorated with a profusion of flowers, draperies, chandeliers, etc. At the moment when the Emperor was about to retire, after spending two or three hours at the fête, a draught of air caught one of the curtains and blew it into the flame of some candles placed too near the windows, and it ignited instantly. Several young men made vain efforts to extinguish the fire by tearing down the draperies and stifling the flame with their hands. In the twinkling of an eye the paper wreaths and garlands were consumed and the woodwork had begun to burn.

The Emperor was among the first to perceive the fire and foresee its consequences. He approached the Empress, who had already risen to go to him, and went out with her, but not without difficulty, on account of the crowds precipitating themselves toward the doors. The Queens of Holland, Naples, Westphalia, the Princess Borghese, etc., followed Their Majesties. The Vice-Queen of Italy, who was far advanced in pregnancy, had remained in the hall, on the platform where the imperial family were seated. The Viceroy, dreading the crush for his wife almost as much as the fire, took her out

through a small door contrived on the platform for the purpose of bringing refreshments to Their Majesties. No one had thought of this exit before Prince Eugène, but several persons availed themselves of it to depart when he did. Her Majesty the Queen of Westphalia did not think herself in safety when she had reached the terrace, and in her fright ran into the rue Taitbout, where she was picked up by a passer-by.

The Emperor accompanied the Empress as far as the entrance of the Champs-Elysées. There he left her, in order to return to the fire, and did not re-enter Saint-Cloud until nearly four o'clock in the morning. We had been in a fearful state of alarm since the arrival of the Empress. Not a soul in the château but was a prey to keen anxiety concerning the Emperor. At last he arrived without accident, but very much fatigued, his clothes in disorder and his face heated by the conflagration; his shoes and stockings were scorched and blackened by the fire. He went straight to the apartment of the Empress, to assure himself if she had entirely recovered from the fright she had experienced. Then he came to his own room, and throwing his hat on to his bed, and dropping into an armchair, he exclaimed: "My God! what a fête!" I noticed that the Emperor's hands were all blackened; he had lost his gloves at the fire. His Majesty was profoundly depressed. While I was undressing him, he asked whether I had been at the Prince's fête; I told him no; whereupon

he deigned to give me some details of the deplorable event. The Emperor spoke with an emotion I never beheld in him more than two or three times in his life, and which he did not experience for his own misfortunes. "This night's conflagration," said His Majesty, "has consumed a heroic woman. The sister-in-law of Prince Schwarzenberg, hearing cries from the burning hall which she thought to be those of her eldest daughter, plunged into the midst of the flames. The floor, already reduced to charcoal, broke under her feet; she disappeared. The poor mother had been in error! all her children were out of danger. Unheard-of efforts were made to extricate her from the flames; but she was dead when these succeeded, and all the attempts of the physician to recall her to life were lavished in vain. The unhappy princess was with child, and far advanced in pregnancy; I advised the Prince myself to endeavor to save the life of the infant at least. It was taken living from its mother's corpse; but it lived only a few minutes."

The emotion of the Emperor redoubled at the close of this recital. I had taken care to have a bath all ready for him, knowing that he would need it on his return. His Majesty did in fact take one, and after the customary frictions, he found himself, as they say, quite set up again. I recollect, however, that he expressed a fear lest the terrible accident of this night might be the harbinger of disastrous events, and he long retained this apprehension. Three years afterwards, during the deplorable Russian campaign,

it was one day announced to the Emperor that the army corps commanded by Prince Schwarzenberg had been destroyed, and that the Prince himself had perished. It turned out, happily, that the tidings were false: but when they were brought to His Majesty, he exclaimed, as if in answer to an idea that had long preoccupied him: "*Then it was* HE *that was menaced by that evil omen!*"

Toward morning, the Emperor sent pages to the houses of all those who had suffered from the catastrophe, to present them with his compliments and make inquiries for their health. Sad replies were returned to His Majesty: Madame the Princesse de La Layen, niece of the Prince-primate, had succumbed to her wounds. The lives of General Touzart, his wife, and his daughter were despaired of, and they did in fact die that day. There were still other victims of this disaster. Among those who escaped after long sufferings, were Prince Kourakin and Madame Durosnel, wife of the general of that name.

Prince Kourakin, always noticeable for the brilliancy, as well as the singular taste of his attire, had dressed himself for the ball in a coat of cloth-of-gold. It was this that saved him. Sparks and firebrands slipped over his coat and the decorations by which it was covered, as if it had been a cuirass. The Prince kept his bed for several months however. In the tumult caused by the fire, he had fallen on his back, and was for a long time trodden under foot and

bruised by the crowd; he owed his life solely to the presence of mind and strength of a musician who had picked him up and carried him out of the throng.

General Durosnel, whose wife had fainted in the ball-room, sprang into the midst of the flames and reappeared almost at once with his precious burden in his arms. He carried Madame Durosnel in this way to a house in the boulevard, where he laid her down in order to go and look for a carriage in which she might be taken back to his residence. Madame the Countess Durosnel had been cruelly burned, and was ill for more than two years in consequence. While the General was crossing over from the house of the ambassador to the boulevard, he saw by the light of the fire a robber stealing the comb from his wife's head as she lay fainting in his arms. This comb was enriched with diamonds and very costly.

Madame Durosnel had an affection for her husband which equalled that he entertained for her. At the close of a sanguinary combat of the second Polish campaign, General Durosnel was missing for several days, and some one wrote to France that he was believed to be dead. The disconsolate countess fell ill with grief and was at the point of death. But not long after, word was received that the General had been found, grievously wounded but not fatally so, and that his recovery would be prompt. When Madame Durosnel received these happy tidings, her joy almost reached delirium. She made a heap of all her mourning apparel and

that of her servants in the court of her residence, set fire to it, and watched the burning of these lugubrious vestments with transports and ebullitions of extravagant gaiety.

Two days after the destruction of Prince Schwarzenberg's hotel, the Emperor received news of the abdication of his brother Louis. At first, His Majesty seemed much annoyed by this event, and said to some one who entered his chamber just after he had been informed of it: "I had foreseen this foolishness on the part of Louis, but I did not think he would be in such a hurry about it." Nevertheless, the Emperor soon came to a decision on the subject, and a few days later, His Majesty, who had not opened his lips during his toilet, suddenly emerged from his reverie just as I handed him his coat, and giving me two or three of his familiar taps: "M. Constant," he said to me, "do you know what are the three capitals of the French Empire?" And without giving me time to answer, he went on: "Paris, Rome, Amsterdam. That makes a good effect; don't you think so?"

CHAPTER XVI

The remains of Marshal Lannes transferred to the Panthéon — The funeral ceremony — Aspect of the church of the Invalides on the day of that ceremony — A glorious inscription — The cortège — Last adieux — Sincere lamentations — Sojourn at Rambouillet — Duel between two of the Emperor's pages — Fatherly prudence of M. d'Assigny — The feast of Saint Louis celebrated in honor of the Empress — Prognostications made after the event — Review of the imperial Dutch guard — Serious disorders — Solicitude of the Emperor — Happy thought of an officer — Influence of the Emperor's mere name — Napoleon godfather and Marie-Louise godmother — The Emperor's distraction during the services of the Church — Happy tidings announced by the Emperor — Delay in the pregnancy of the Empress — The cause of this discovered — Nausea of Marie-Louise — Universal joy.

IN the last days of July, people went in throngs to the church of the Invalides, where the bodies of General Saint-Hilaire and of the Duc de Montebello were deposited. The Marshal's remains were placed near the tomb of Turenne. The mornings were spent in the celebration of several masses which were said on a double altar erected between the nave and the dome. During four days, a long streamer, or black pennant, bordered with white, floated from the steeple of the dome.

On the very day when the remains of the Marshal

were translated from the church of the Invalides to the Panthéon I was sent from Saint-Cloud to Paris on a private message from the Emperor. I had still a few moments of leisure after my commission was executed, and I employed them in going to see this doleful ceremony and saying a last adieu to the brave warrior whose death I had witnessed. At noon, all the civil and military authorities repaired to the hotel. The body was transferred from the dome into the church, under a catafalque in the shape of a great Egyptian pyramid borne on a raised platform, opened by four large arches, the supports of which were garlanded with laurels interlaced with cypress. At the corners were statues in the attitude of grief, representing Force, Justice, Prudence, and Temperance, the characteristic virtues of heroes. This pyramid was terminated by a cinerary urn, surrounded by a fiery crown. On the sides of the pyramid were the armorial bearings of the Duke, and medallions recalling the most memorable deeds of his life, upheld by weeping genii. Under the obelisk was placed the sarcophagus containing his body. At the angles were trophies composed of flags taken from different enemies. Silver candlesticks, in great profusion, were fixed on the steps which served as a platform for this monument. The oak altar, replaced where it had been before the Revolution, was double, and had a double tabernacle. On the tabernacle doors were the tables of the Law; it was surmounted by a great cross, on the transverse arms of which a

winding sheet was suspended. At the corners of the altar were the statues of Saint Louis and Saint Napoleon. Four large candelabra were placed on pedestals at the angles of the steps. The pavement of the choir and that of the nave were covered with a mourning carpet. The pulpit, draped in black, and decorated with the imperial eagle, from which the Marshal's funeral oration was delivered, was placed on the left, and in front of the catafalque; on the right was an ebony seat, decorated with the imperial arms, bees, stars, galloons, fringes, and other ornaments in silver-plate. It was intended for the prince archchancellor of the Empire, who presided at the ceremony. Some steps had been raised in the arches of the side aisles, corresponding to the tribunes which were above. In front of these steps were seats and benches for the civil and military authorities, the cardinals, archbishops, bishops, etc. The arms, decorations, baton, and laurel crown of the Marshal lay on his coffin.

The whole nave and the back of the side aisles were hung with black with white borders; so were the windows. On these draperies were displayed the baton and monogram of the Marshal.

The organ was hidden by vast hangings which did not impede the production of its mournful sounds. Eighteen sepulchral lamps of silver were suspended, by chains of the same metal, from lances terminating in banners taken from the enemy.

On the pilasters of the nave were fixed trophies

of arms, composed of flags taken in the different battles in which the Marshal had taken part.

The altar railing, on the side next the Esplanade, was hung with mourning; above it were the arms of the Duke, kept in place by two Fames, holding palms of victory; above might be read the inscription: NAPOLEON *to the memory of the Duc de Montebello, who died gloriously on the field of Essling, May* 22, 1809.

The conservatory of music executed a mass made up of selections from the finest of Mozart's sacred compositions. After the ceremony, the body was borne to the door of the church and placed upon the funeral car, which was adorned with laurels and four sheaves of flags taken from the enemy in the battles in which the Marshal had been engaged, and by the troops of his army corps. It was preceded by a military and religious procession, and followed by one of glory and honor. The military cortège was made up of detachments of all arms, — cavalry, light infantry and the line, horse and foot artillery, — followed by cannons, artillery wagons, sappers and miners, the whole preceded by drums, trumpets, bands, etc.; the general staff, with the Marshal Prince of Wagram at its head, comprising all the general officers and the staff of the division and the place.

The religious procession included children and old men from the asylums, the clergy of all the parishes and of the Metropolitan Church of Paris,

with crosses and banners, chanters and religious music, and the chaplain of His Majesty with the assistants. The car which bore the Marshal's body followed immediately behind it. The Marshal Duc de Conegliano, Count Serrurier, the Duc d'Istrie, and Prince d'Eckmühl held the corners of the pall. On either side of the car, two aides-de-camp of the Marshal carried two standards. On the coffin were fastened the Marshal's baton and the decorations of the Duc de Montebello.

After the car came the mourners and the cortège of honor ; the empty carriage of the Marshal with two of his aides on horseback at the doors, four mourning carriages intended for the Marshal's family, the carriages of princes, great dignitaries, ministers, marshals, colonel-generals, and chief inspectors. A detachment of cavalry, preceded by trumpets and mounted musicians, followed the carriages and closed the procession. A band accompanied the chants, the bells of all the churches rang, and thirteen volleys of cannon were fired at intervals.

On arriving at the entrance of the subterranean church of Sainte Geneviève, the body was lifted down by grenadiers who had been decorated and wounded in the same battles as the Marshal. His Majesty's chaplain remitted it to the arch-priest. Prince d'Eckmühl addressed to the Duc de Montebello the regrets of the army, and the Prince Archchancellor deposited on the coffin the medal destined to per-

petuate the memory of these funeral honors, of the warrior who had received them, and of the services by which they had been deserved. Then the crowd slipped away by degrees until none remained in the temple but some former servitors of the Marshal, who honored his memory by the tears they shed in silence as much and more than did this public mourning and these imposing ceremonies. They recognized me, for we had been together in campaign. I remained with them for some time, and we left the Panthéon together.

During my short excursion to Paris, Their Majesties had left Saint-Cloud for Rambouillet. I set off to rejoin them with the equipages of the Marshal Prince de Neufchâtel, who had momentarily absented himself from court to be present at the obsequies of the brave Duc de Montebello.

If my memory does not betray me, it was on arriving at Rambouillet that I learned the details of a duel fought that very day between two of His Majesty's pages. I do not recollect the cause of their quarrel, but although frivolous enough in the beginning, it had become very serious on account of the acts of violence it had occasioned. It was a dispute of schoolboys, but these schoolboys wore swords and regarded themselves, not without reason, as more than three-fourths soldiers; hence it was decided that they should fight. To do so, two things were essential,—time and secrecy. As to their time, it was employed almost uninterruptedly

from four or five o'clock in the morning until nine in the evening. Secrecy was not observed.

M. d'Assigny, a man of rare merit and perfect virtue, was then under-governor of the pages, and his cares, his kindness, and his justice had endeared him to his pupils. Wishing to avert a misfortune, he summoned the two adversaries to his presence; but these youths, destined to the army, could not listen to any reparation short of a duel. M. d'Assigny had too much sense to attempt to preach the opposite view; he would not have been listened to; but he offered his services as witness, was accepted by the young men, and asked to select the weapons. He chose the pistol, and rendezvous was given for the next morning at a very early hour. Everything was arranged in the way customary in this sort of affairs. One of the pages fired first and missed his adversary; the other discharged his weapon in the air. At once they rushed into each other's arms, and M. d'Assigny seized the occasion to give them a truly paternal reprimand. As for the rest, the worthy under-governor not merely kept their secret, but his own. The pistols, loaded by him, contained only cork bullets, but the young men never knew it.

A number of persons were awaiting with curiosity the coming of the 25th of August, the feast of the patron saint of Her Majesty the Empress. They thought that, through fear of awakening the souvenirs of the Royalists, the Emperor would defer

solemnizing it until some other period of the year, which he could easily have done by fêting his august spouse under the name of Marie. But the Emperor was not deterred by such fears. It is even probable that he was the only person in the château to whom the idea did not occur. Sure of his power and of the hopes then built upon him by the French nation, he very well knew that he had nothing to dread from exiled princes or a party which seemed dead beyond the hope of resurrection. I have since heard it said, and very seriously, that His Majesty had done wrong in keeping the feast of Saint Louis, that it had brought him bad luck, etc.; but these prognostics, thought of after the event, did not at the time occupy the mind of anybody, and the day of Saint Louis was celebrated in honor of the Empress Marie-Louise with extraordinary pomp and rejoicings.

A few days afterward, Their Majesties reviewed in the Bois de Boulogne the regiments of the Dutch imperial guard, which the Emperor had recently ordered to Paris. To celebrate their happy arrival, the Emperor had ordered casks of wine, staved in at one end, to be placed at intervals in the alleys of the wood, where every soldier might drink at discretion. This imperial munificence had sorry results which might have become fatal. The Dutch soldiers, more accustomed to strong beer than to wine, but nevertheless very greedy for the latter drink, used it inordinately, and were excited by it to a

very disquieting degree. They began at first by disputes either among themselves or with curious observers who came too near. Then a storm having come up suddenly, and the excursionists from Saint-Cloud and the environs making haste to get back to Paris by crossing the Bois de Boulogne, the Hollanders, in a state of almost complete intoxication, began beating up the wood, arresting every woman who made her appearance, and treating the men by whom they were usually accompanied very rudely. In a moment the whole wood was resounding with shrieks of terror, vociferations, oaths, and struggles without number. Several frightened people retreated as far as Saint-Cloud, where the Emperor was. No sooner was he informed of this disorder than he despatched patrol after patrol to bring the Hollanders to reason. His Majesty was in great wrath, and said: "Did any one ever see the like of these thickheads? There they are, all upset by a couple of glasses of wine!" In spite of this sort of pleasantry, the Emperor was not without anxiety. He came to the park gate, opposite the bridge, and gave advice to the officers and soldiers who were to attempt the restoration of order. Unfortunately, the night was so far advanced that they could not make out just where they ought to go, and God knows how the affair would have terminated if the officer of one of the patrols had not been inspired with the happy thought of exclaiming: "The Emperor! Here is the Emperor!" His men took up the cry,

shouting: "Here is the Emperor!" as they assaulted the most riotous of the Hollanders. And so great was the terror inspired in these foreign soldiers by the mere name of His Majesty, that thousands of armed men, drunk and furious, dispersed before that alone, and regained their quarters as quickly and as secretly as they could. Several of them were arrested and severely punished.

I have already said that the Emperor occupied himself rather frequently with the toilet of the Empress, and even with that of her ladies. As a rule, he liked to see all those who surrounded him dressed well, and even richly. Nevertheless, he gave an order about this time the wisdom of which I admired. He and Her Majesty the Empress were to be sponsors one day for the infants of some of his great officers, and foreseeing that the parents would be certain to try and outdo each other in magnificent robes for their newly born children, the Emperor decreed that the babies to be baptized should all wear long white linen robes. This prudent measure spared both the purses and the self-love of the parents. I noticed during this ceremony that the Emperor found some difficulty in paying the attention required for answering the questions put by the officiating priest. He was usually somewhat preoccupied during the offices of the Church, although they were not long, never lasting more than twelve or fifteen minutes, and yet I have been assured that His Majesty had asked if they could not be recited

in still less time. He gnawed his nails, took snuff more frequently than common, and was constantly looking around him, while a prince of the Church was giving himself the useless trouble of turning the leaves of His Majesty's book and finding his places for him.

At the end of the baptismal ceremony of which I have just been speaking, the Emperor rubbed his hands and said to some of the intimate friends surrounding him: "Before long, gentlemen, I hope we shall have another baby to baptize." These words of His Majesty were received with all the pleasure they were calculated to inspire. However, Her Majesty's pregnancy had been talked about for some time at the château. It had not occurred immediately after her marriage, and the Emperor had been disturbed about it. His first wife had not been able to give him a child, and that fact had been the chief cause of the divorce; was a similar misfortune to be expected on the part of Marie-Louise? For the Emperor had no reason to suspect himself; on the contrary, he had twice already had the honors of paternity. These ideas occasionally made him rather gloomy, and he often consulted his physicians. These gentlemen applied themselves to searching out the cause of the delay which threatened to balk the Emperor's most ardent wishes, and discovered that the Empress took too many baths. The Emperor spoke to her about it; she abated their frequency, and we were soon apprised of the happy result. The

private garden of Fontainebleau, where we were then, was under my windows, and I several times saw the Empress walking there, supported by her women, and suffering from those fits of nausea which made every one else rejoice.

CHAPTER XVII

The pregnancy of Marie-Louise — What the public thought about it — The Emperor's agitation — Napoleon takes a bath — M. Dubois enters the bath-room in great discomposure — What the Emperor said — He goes up to the apartments of Marie-Louise — What Marie-Louise said — The Emperor listening with anguish at the door of the room — Madame de Montesquiou — The King of Rome comes into the world — Paternal joy of the Emperor — The spectacle presented by the streets of Paris — The twenty-second volley — Madame Blanchard — Pages acting as couriers — The sixth and seventh stories of Parisian houses — Madame Blanchard again — The balloon falls — Doubts concerning the pregnancy of Marie-Louise — Napoleon accused of libertinage — His fondness for children — My son dies of croup — The Emperor's words — My wife at Malmaison — Kindness of Josephine — Consolation.

THE pregnancy of Marie-Louise had been exempt from accidents, and foreboded a safe delivery. The moment for it was awaited by the Emperor with an impatience which all France had long shared with him. It was a curious thing at the time to observe the state of the public mind in the beginning of March, when the people, uncertain of the sex of the expected infant, were forming all manner of conjectures, and uniting their ardent wishes that it might be a son who would receive the vast heritage of imperial glory. March 19, at seven o'clock in the evening, the Empress felt the first pains.

From that instant the whole palace was in a flutter. The news was carried to the Emperor. He sent immediately for M. Dubois, who had been living in the château for some time, and whose attentions were so precious on this occasion. All the private attendants of the Empress, and also Madame de Montesquiou, were in the apartment. The Emperor, his mother and sisters, and MM. Corvisart, Bourdier, and Yvan were in a neighboring salon.

The Emperor frequently came in to encourage his young wife. Within the palace expectation was keen, passionate, and noisy. It was who should get the first tidings of the delivery.

The pains, which had been feeble during the night, ceased entirely at five o'clock in the morning. M. Dubois, observing no signs of a speedy delivery, said so to the Emperor, who dismissed everybody and went to take a bath.

The anxiety he was undergoing made this brief moment of repose essential to him; he was greatly moved. He told me how much the Empress was suffering: "But," he added, "she is full of strength and courage."

The Empress, worn out by fatigue, slept for some minutes. She was awakened by hard pains, which constantly increased, yet without bringing on the natural crisis, and M. Dubois became convinced that the delivery would be difficult and laborious. His Majesty had been in his bath scarcely a quarter of an hour when he was announced, and came into

the bath-room with his face much drawn. He said to the Emperor that out of a thousand confinements not more than one was likely to present itself as did that of the Empress, and that he was afraid he could not save both the mother and the child. "Come, then," said the Emperor, "don't lose your head, M. Dubois; save the mother, think of nothing but the mother. I will follow you." The Emperor got out of his bath precipitately, giving me scarcely time enough to dry him. He put on his dressing-gown and went down stairs. I know that he embraced the Empress tenderly, recommended her to be courageous, and held her hand for some time. But unable to restrain his emotion, he retired to an adjoining salon, and there, listening to the slightest sounds, and trembling with fear, he spent a quarter of an hour in cruel anguish. It was necessary to use instruments. Marie-Louise perceived them, and said with sorrowful bitterness: "Must I be sacrificed then, because I am an empress?" Madame de Montesquiou, who was holding her head, said to her: "Courage, Madame; I have been through all that; I assure you that your precious life is not in danger."

The labor lasted twenty-six minutes and was very painful. The feet of the child came first, and great efforts were necessary in order to extricate the head. The Emperor was waiting in the dressing-room; he was as pale as death and seemed beside himself. At last the child was born. Then the Emperor

rushed into the room and embraced the Empress with extreme tenderness, without even glancing at the child, who was believed to be dead. It did in fact remain seven minutes without any sign of life. A few drops of brandy were blown into its mouth; it was slapped lightly all over the body with the palm of the hand; it was covered with hot napkins. At last it uttered a cry.

The Emperor sprang from the arms of the Empress to embrace this son whose birth was for him the last and highest gift of fortune. He seemed overwhelmed with joy; he would turn from the mother to the child, and from the child to the mother, and appeared unable to satisfy himself with gazing at both. When he came back to his room to dress his face shone with delight. On seeing me, he said: "Well! Constant, we have a big boy; he is splendidly made for ear-pulling, for example." He announced it in the same way to all the other persons whom he met. It was in these effusions of domestic joy that I could appreciate how profoundly the pleasures of family life were felt by this great soul who was supposed to be sensitive to glory alone.

From the instant when the great bell of Notre-Dame and the steeples of the different parishes of Paris began to make themselves heard in the middle of the night, until that when the cannon announced the happy delivery of the Empress, an extreme agitation was perceptible all over the city. At

daybreak, crowds began pouring toward the Tuileries. The courts and docks were encumbered by them. Every one was anxiously awaiting the first discharge of cannon. But this curious spectacle occurred not merely at the Tuileries and the neighboring quarters; by half-past nine o'clock you might see people in the streets most remote from the château, and in all parts of Paris, stopping to count with emotion the successive discharges. The twenty-second, which announced the birth of a boy, was greeted with general acclamations. To the expectant silence which had suspended as if by enchantment the progress of all who were scattered throughout the various quarters of the city, succeeded a movement of enthusiasm difficult to describe. In that twenty-second cannon there was a whole dynasty, an entire future. Hats flew into the air, people ran up to meet entire strangers, and with mutual embraces shouted: *Long live the Emperor!* Old soldiers shed tears of joy in reflecting that by their sweat and their exhaustion they had aided in preparing the heritage of the King of Rome, and that their laurels were to shelter the cradle of a dynasty.

Napoleon, hidden behind the curtain of one of the Empress's windows, enjoyed the spectacle of the popular delight, and seemed profoundly affected by it. His eyes swam with tears, and he came in that condition to embrace his son. Glory had never caused him to shed a tear, but the happiness of

being a father had softened this heart which the most brilliant victories and most sincere evidences of public admiration seemed scarcely to touch. And in fact, if Napoleon was ever justified in believing in his fortune, it was on the day when he, who had begun life as the second son of a Corsican family, had been made, by an Austrian archduchess, the father of a king. In the course of a few hours, the event which France and Europe had been awaiting with great impatience had become the private festival of every family.

At half-past ten o'clock, Madame Blanchard went up in a balloon from the Military School to spread the news of the birth of the King of Rome in all the towns and villages she might pass.

The happy event was announced by telegraph in all quarters, and by two o'clock in the afternoon replies had been received from Lyons, Lille, Brussels, Antwerp, Brest, and several other large cities of the Empire. As may easily be believed, these replies were in perfect accord with the sentiments of the capital.

To respond to the eagerness of the crowds continually besieging the doors of the palace for tidings of the Empress and her august infant, it had been decided that one of the chamberlains on duty should remain from morning till evening in the first salon of the grand apartment to receive those who should present themselves, and to acquaint them with the contents of the bulletins which Her Majesty's physi-

cians were to send in twice a day. Within a few hours extraordinary couriers were carrying over all roads the news of the accouchement of the Empress; some of the Emperor's pages were charged with this mission to the Italian Senate and the municipal bodies of Milan and Rome. In all the fortified cities and in the ports orders were given for the same salvos as in Paris, and for the draping of the fleets. A lovely evening favored the special rejoicings of the capital. The houses had been spontaneously illuminated. Those who seek to divine from external appearances the real sentiments of a people on such occasions, remarked that the upper stories of houses situated in the faubourgs were as light as the most sumptuous hotels and handsomest houses of the capital. Public edifices, which under other circumstances become noticeable by reason of the darkness of the surrounding buildings, were scarcely so in this profusion of lights which public gratitude had kindled in every window. The boatmen gave an impromptu fête on the water which lasted half the night, and was participated in by an immense crowd on the river banks, who testified the utmost joy. This people, which for thirty years had been experiencing so many emotions, and which had fêted so many victories, displayed as lively an enthusiasm as if this were a first festivity, or signified a happy alteration in its destiny. Verses were sung or recited in all the theatres, and there was not a poetical form, from the ode to the fable, which was

not employed to celebrate the event of March 20, 1811. I learned from a very well-informed person that the sum of one hundred thousand francs, previously deducted from the Emperor's private funds, was divided by M. Dequevauvilliers, secretary of accounts to the chamber, between the authors of the poesies which were sent to the Tuileries. And finally, fashion, which exploits the least events, gave birth to stuffs entitled *things roi-de-Rome*, just as under the old régime there had been *things Dauphin*.

At nine o'clock in the evening of March 20, the King of Rome received private baptism in the chapel of the Tuileries. The ceremony was magnificent. The Emperor Napoleon, surrounded by the princes and princesses and all his court, took his place in the middle of the chapel, in an armchair surmounted by a dais with a prie-dieu. A granite plinth, supporting a magnificent gilt vase which was to serve as the baptismal font, had been placed on a white velvet carpet between the altar and the balustrade. The Emperor was grave, but paternal affection made his countenance look happy; one might have thought he felt half relieved of the burden of Empire by the sight of the august infant who seemed destined one day to receive it from his father's hands. When he approached the baptismal font to present the child for private baptism, there was a moment of silence and recollection which afforded a touching contrast with the noisy gaiety

which was even then animating an immense crowd on the outside who had been drawn into the neighborhood of the Tuileries from all parts of Paris by the magnificent illuminations and splendid fireworks.

Madame Blanchard, who had started in a balloon an hour after the King of Rome was born, to spread the news in the places she should pass through on her aërial voyage, had first descended at Saint-Tiébault, near Lagny. But as the wind failed her there, she returned to Paris. Her balloon went up again after her departure, and fell anew in a market-town six leagues distant. The inhabitants, finding nothing in it but some clothes and provisions, never doubted that the intrepid balloonist had been wrecked, but just as the news of her death was sent to Paris, Madame Blanchard herself arrived there and dispelled all anxiety.

A great many persons had doubted the pregnancy of Marie-Louise. Some thought that it was feigned. I have never been able to understand the stupid arguments put forward on the subject by these persons, and which malevolence sought to foist upon the public. The singular thing about it, and what proves that for the most part it proceeded from bad faith and folly, was that while some accused the Emperor of libertinage, the others believed him incapable of making a nineteen-year-old princess a mother. Thus hatred falsifies the judgment. If Napoleon had had illegitimate children, why could he not have legitimate ones, especially with a young

wife whose health was generally known to be flourishing? For the rest, this was not the first, nor was it the last false rumor of the sort that Napoleon gave rise to. His position was too high and his glory too brilliant not to occasion exaggerated sentiments, whether of admiration or of hatred.

There were also malevolent persons who were pleased to say that Naopleon was somewhat incapable of tender sentiments, and that the happiness of being a father did not penetrate to the depths of this soul devoured by ambition. Among a thousand traits I can cite one little anecdote which touches me particularly, and which I am all the better pleased to relate because, while it gives a victorious reply to the calumnies of which I speak, it also proves the very special kindliness with which His Majesty honored me. Both as a father and a faithful servant, I experience a satisfaction, sweet though painful, in setting it down in these Memoirs. Napoleon was very fond of children. One day he asked me to bring him mine. I went out to look for him. Meanwhile M. de Talleyrand was introduced to the Emperor's apartment. The conversation lasted a long time. My child grew tired of waiting, and I took him back to his mother. Not long afterwards, he was attacked by the croup. This cruel malady, against which His Majesty had thought himself bound to make a special appeal to the medical faculty of Paris, carried off many children from their families. Mine died in Paris; we

were then at the château of Compiègne. I received the sad tidings just as it was time to go down to the toilet. I was too overwhelmed by this loss to repair to my duties. The Emperor sent to inquire what prevented me from coming, and when he was told that I had just heard of the death of my son, he said kindly: "That poor Constant! What a horrible affliction! We fathers, we know what that is!"

Not long afterwards my wife went to see the Empress Josephine at Malmaison. This amiable princess deigned to receive her in the little salon which led into her sleeping-room. There she made her sit down beside her, and tried to console her by affecting words. She said we were not the only ones stricken by this misfortune, that she also had lost her grandson by the same malady. As she said so she began to weep, for this souvenir renewed in her soul her recent griefs. My wife bathed the hands of this excellent princess with her tears. Josephine added a thousand touching things, seeking to alleviate her troubles by sharing them, and thus to reawaken resignation in the heart of a poor mother. The memory of this kindness soothed our former sorrows, and I own that it is both an honor and a consolation for us to remember the august sympathies which the loss of this dear infant excited in the hearts of Napoleon and Josephine. No one will ever know how sensitive and compassionate this princess was, especially to the griefs of others, and what treasures of kindliness her beautiful soul contained.

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CHAPTER XVIII

Marie-Louise and Josephine — Simplicity of the young Empress — She imagines herself ill — M. Corvisart — Pills of bread crumbs and sugar — Germanic locutions of Marie-Louise — Tenderness of Napoleon — Rigid etiquette — Good grace of the Empress — Caen — Benevolent action — Cherbourg — A descent to the bottom of the Cherbourg dock — Baptism of the King of Rome — The imperial cortège — Souvenirs of the fête — The Emperor shows his son to the spectators — Banquet and concert at the Hôtel-de-Ville — Benevolent words — The Tiber at Paris — The aëronaut Garnerin — The provinces — The Puy-de-Dôme in a blaze — The sea on fire in the port of Flushing — More fêtes — The Emperor and the Mayor of Lyons — The courtiers — The musicians — Prince Aldobrandini — The Prince and Princess Borghese — People who see bad omens — Women without shoes — No carriages — Trait of gallantry and kindliness on the part of M. de Rémusat.

NAPOLEON was accustomed to draw comparisons between Marie-Louise and Josephine, attributing to the latter all the advantages of art and grace, and to the former the charms of simplicity, modesty, and innocence. Occasionally there was something infantine in this simplicity. I will cite but one example of this, which came to me from a good source. The young Empress, believing herself to be ill, consulted M. Corvisart, who very clearly saw that her imagination alone was affected, and it was probably mere nervousness. Hence he

contented himself with prescribing some pills composed of bread crumbs and sugar, which the Empress took and found herself better. She thanked M. Corvisart for her recovery, and as may readily be believed, he did not think proper to explain to her his little fraud.

Having been educated in a German court and learned French only with masters, Marie-Louise spoke that language with the difficulty one usually finds in expressing one's self in a foreign tongue. Among the vicious locutions she sometimes employed, and which in her gracious mouth were not devoid of charm, there was one that particularly struck me, because she often used it: "Napoleon, qu'est-ce que *veux-tu?*" (Instead of qu'est-ce que *tu veux?*)

The Emperor displayed the greatest affection for his young wife, and yet he subjected her to all the rules of etiquette, to which the Empress adapted herself with the best possible grace. In the month of May, 1811, Their Majesties made a journey to the departments of Calvados and La Manche, and were received with enthusiasm by all the cities. The Emperor marked his sojourn at Caen by gifts, favors, and benevolent actions. Several young men belonging to good families obtained sub-lieutenancies; one hundred and thirty thousand francs were devoted to different charities. From Caen, Their Majesties went to Cherbourg. On the day after their arrival, the Emperor went out on horseback

early in the morning, visited the heights of the city, went aboard of several vessels, and was everywhere surrounded by a crowd who thronged about him crying: *Long live the Emperor!* The next day His Majesty held several councils, and in the evening visited all the naval establishments, even going to the bottom of the dock hollowed out of the live rock to receive the ships of the line, and which was to be covered with fifty-five feet of water. In this brilliant journey the Empress had her share in the enthusiasm of the inhabitants, and in return she gave a cordial reception to the regional authorities in the different receptions which took place. I intentionally lay stress on these details; they prove that the joy occasioned by the birth of the King of Rome was not confined to Paris, but that, on the contrary, the provinces sympathized marvellously with the capital.

The return to Paris of Their Majesties renewed the rejoicings and festivities. The ceremony of the baptism of the King of Rome, and the fêtes by which it was accompanied, were celebrated in Paris with a pomp worthy of their object. For spectators they had the entire population of Paris, augmented by a prodigious throng of foreigners of all classes.

At four o'clock the Senate started from its palace, the Council of State from the Tuileries, the Legislative Body from its palace, the Court of Cassation, the court of accounts, the council of the university, the imperial court from their usual place of session,

the municipal body of Paris and the deputations from the forty-nine good cities from the Hôtel-de-Ville. On their arrival at the Metropolitan Church, these bodies were placed according to their rank by the masters and assistants of ceremonies, to the right and left of the throne, from the choir to the middle of the nave. The diplomatic corps entered the tribune intended for it at five o'clock.

At half-past five o'clock cannon announced the departure of Their Majesties from the palace of the Tuileries. The imperial cortège was of dazzling magnificence; the superb uniform of the troops, the richness and elegance of the carriages, the brilliancy of the costumes, afforded a ravishing spectacle. Those acclamations of the people which resounded along the passage of Their Majesties, those houses tapestried with festoons and draperies, those flags floating from the windows, that long file of carriages whose horses and ornamentation successively augmented in magnificence and followed each other as if in hierarchical order, that immense apparatus of a fête animated by a real sentiment and ideas of the future, — all that is profoundly graven in my memory, and often occupies even yet the long leisure hours of the old servant of a family which has disappeared. The ceremony of the baptism was carried out with unaccustomed pomp and solemnity. After the baptism, the Emperor took his august son in his arms and showed him to the spectators. Acclamations which, until then, had been restrained by the

sanctity of the ceremony and the majesty of the place, at once broke out from every side. When the prayers were ended, Their Majesties repaired to the Hôtel-de-Ville at eight o'clock in the evening, and were received there by the municipal body. A brilliant concert and a banquet had been offered to them by the city of Paris. The decoration of the banquet hall displayed the arms of the forty-nine good cities, Paris, Rome, and Amsterdam coming first; the forty-six others by alphabetic order. The banquet over, Their Majesties went to take their places in the concert hall. After the concert they repaired to the throne room, where all the invited guests formed a circle. The Emperor went around it, speaking affably and sometimes even familiarly to the majority of the persons composing it, not one of whom failed to remember the benevolent words addressed to him. Finally, before they retired, Their Majesties were invited to enter the artificial garden which had been formed over the court of the Hôtel-de-Ville. The decoration of it was very elegant; at the back of the garden the Tiber was represented by abundant streams, the course of which was most artfully arranged, and diffused a pleasant coolness. Their Majesties left the Hôtel-de-Ville at half-past eleven, and re-entered the Tuileries by the light of the most elegant illuminations and luminous emblems in the most delicate taste. The serenest weather and the mildest temperature had favored this delightful day.

The aëronaut Garnerin, who started from Paris at half-past six in the evening, descended next morning at Maule, department of Seine-et-Oise. After having rested there, he got into his balloon again and continued on his way.

The provinces vied in magnificence with the capital in celebrating the fêtes of the birth and baptism of the King of Rome. All that could be imagined of most curious design, whether in emblems or illuminations, had been executed in order to impart greater pomp to these festivities. Each city had been guided, as to its manner of rendering homage to the new king, either by its geographical situation or its special destination. Thus at Clermont-Ferrand an immense fire had been kindled at six o'clock in the evening on the summit of Puy-de-Dôme, at a height of more than five thousand feet. Several departments could enjoy all night this singular and majestic spectacle. In the harbor of Flushing, the vessels were covered with streamers and flags of all colors. In the evening the entire squadron was illuminated; thousands of lanterns, suspended from the masts, yards, and shrouds, afforded an enchanting sight. All of a sudden, at the signal of a fusee fired from the admiral's ship, all the vessels simultaneously vomited forth sheaves of flame which outlined on an inky sky those imposing masses, repeated by a sea as smooth as glass.

We did nothing but pass from one fête to another: it was bewildering. The rejoicings of the baptism

were in fact followed by a fête given by the Emperor in the private park of Saint-Cloud. From the morning, the road from Paris was covered with equipages and pedestrians. The fête took place in the closed park. The orangery, all of whose tubs decorated the front of the château, was ornamented with rich hangings. Temples and kiosks rose amidst the thickets. The entire length of the avenue of chestnut trees was decked with garlands of colored lamps. Fountains of orgeat and currant shrub had been so distributed that every person present could refresh himself. Elegantly served tables were laid in the alley. The whole park was illuminated by fire pots concealed in the shrubbery of the thickets.

Madame Blanchard had been ordered to hold herself in readiness to start at half-past nine o'clock at a given signal. At nine, the balloon being filled, she got into her car. She was taken to the extremity of the swan pond, opposite the château; just at the moment of departure she was maintained in this position, and at a height which considerably surpassed that of the tallest trees, so that for more than half an hour she could be seen by all the spectators present at the fête. At thirty-five minutes past nine, a fusee, set off from the château, having given the expected signal, the intrepid aëronaut was seen to rise majestically into the air before the assembly gathered in the throne room. On reaching a certain height, she set fire to a star in fireworks of immense

size, hung around the car of which she occupied the centre. This star, which during seven or eight minutes launched from its points and angles a great quantity of other little stars, produced the most extraordinary effect. This was the first time that a woman had ever been seen to rise boldly into the air, surrounded by fireworks: she seemed to be riding on a chariot of fire at an immense height. I thought myself in a fairy palace. All that part of the gardens which Their Majesties passed through presented a spectacle of which it is impossible to form an idea. The illuminations were designed with perfect taste, the games afforded a great variety, and numerous orchestras hidden among the trees added still more to the enchantment. At a given signal, three pigeons flew from the top of a column surmounted by a vase of flowers and came to offer Their Majesties several very ingenious devices. Further away, German peasants were waltzing on a charming greensward, and crowning the bust of Her Imperial Majesty with flowers. The nymphs and shepherds of the opera were executing dances. Finally, a stage had been erected amongst the trees, in order to represent the *Village Fête*, a divertisement composed by M. Étienne and set to music by Nicolo. The Emperor and Empress were watching this spectacle from underneath a canopy, when there suddenly came an abundant shower which fluttered all the spectators. Their Majesties, being sheltered by the canopy, did not at first per-

ceive the rain. The Emperor was talking at the time with the Mayor of Lyons. The latter was complaining of the small demand for the stuffs of that city. Napoleon, noticing that a heavy shower was falling, said to this functionary: "I warrant you that there will be plenty of orders to-morrow."

The Emperor kept his place during a great part of the storm. The courtiers, dressed in silks and velvets, and with uncovered heads, received the rain with a laughing air. The poor musicians, drenched to the bone, could no longer draw a sound from their instruments, which had either been broken or had their strings relaxed by the rain; it was time to put an end to this. The Emperor gave the signal for departure and withdrew.

On that day, Prince Aldobrandini, who accompanied the Empress in the capacity of first equerry, was so lucky as to "borrow" an umbrella to shelter Marie-Louise. There was great dissatisfaction in the group from which this loan was made, because the umbrella was not returned. On that evening, Prince Borghese and the Princess Pauline narrowly escaped falling into the Seine with their carriage as they were returning to their country seat of Neuilly. Those who delight in drawing omens, and especially those who, in very small numbers, beheld with vexed eyes the joys of the Empire, did not fail to remark that all the fêtes given to Marie-Louise had invariably been disturbed by some accident. They talked affectedly

of the ball given by Prince de Schwarzenberg at the time of the espousals of Their Majesties, of the fire that had consumed the dancing hall, and of the tragic death of several persons, notably that of the Prince's sister. They drew evil auguries from this coincidence; some through malevolence, and to sap the enthusiasm inspired by Napoleon's lofty fortune, others through a superstitious credulity, as if there were material for a serious comparison between a fire which cost the lives of several persons and the very ordinary accident of a June rain-storm which spoiled dresses and wet to the bone thousands of spectators. It was an extremely amusing spectacle for him who had no finery to spoil, and who ran no risk of catching cold, to see these poor women, drenched by the rain, fleeing from one side to the other, with or without a cavalier, and seeking shelters which were nowhere to be found. Some of them were so lucky as to find modest umbrellas, but the majority saw the flowers on their heads beaten down by the rain, or their trimmings, all dripping with water, trailing on the ground in a pitiful way. When it was necessary to return to Paris, carriages were lacking. The coachmen had prudently considered that the fête would last until morning, and had not troubled themselves to wait for people all night. Those who had equipages could not use them; the throng was such that it was almost impossible to move about. Several ladies lost their way and returned to Paris on foot; others

lost their shoes, and it was a pity to see their pretty little feet in the mud. Happily, there were very few accidents. The doctor and the bed set everything to rights. But the Emperor laughed a good deal over this adventure, and said it would be profitable to the manufacturers.

M. de Rémusat, so good, so eager to render service, so forgetful of himself for others, had succeeded in obtaining an umbrella. He met my wife and mother-in-law, who were making their escape like the rest. He took each under an arm, and brought them back to the palace without the least damage. During an hour he kept on making this journey from the palace to the park, and from the park to the palace, and he had the happiness of being useful to a large number of ladies, whose toilets he thus saved from utter ruin. This was a trait of gallantry for which every one bore him infinite good-will, because there was blended with it a sentiment of touching kindness.

CHAPTER XIX

1811 and 1812 — Reflections — Fête of the Empress — Trianon — Route from Paris to Trianon — Courtiers and common people elbowing each other at the fête — The public of the fêtes — All Paris at Versailles — The Empress addresses gracious words to the ladies — M. Alissan de Chazet — A promenade of Their Majesties in the park of the Little Trianon — A Flemish living picture — All the provinces of the Empire represented at this fête — Marie-Louise — She speaks little to the men in her service — Her steward — In private life she was good and gentle — Her coldness toward Madame de Montesquiou — Reciprocal coolness between Madame de Montesquiou and the Duchesse de Montebello — Visits paid her by the Empress — A reproach which Josephine made to Madame de Montebello — The King of Rome is taken to Bagatelle and presented to Josephine — She bathes the august infant with her tears — What Josephine said to me on this subject — The nurse of the King of Rome — Marie-Louise and her son — Marie-Louise and Josephine — The repugnance of Marie-Louise for heat and odors.

THIS year seemed to be that of fêtes. I dwell upon it with pleasure, because it preceded a year which was that of misfortunes. 1811 and 1812 afford a striking contrast. All those flowers which were lavished on the fêtes of the King of Rome and his august mother covered an abyss; all that enthusiasm was changed to mourning a few months later; never were fêtes more brilliant followed by more startling reverses. Let us then once

more abandon ourselves to the charms of the final rejoicings which preceded 1812. They are souvenirs which I need in order to strengthen me before I enter upon that epoch of profitless sacrifices, of blood shed without either preserving or gaining, of glory with no results. The Empress's birthday was celebrated August 25, at Trianon. From early morning the road between Paris and Trianon was covered with an immense number of carriages and pedestrians. The same sentiment impelled the court, the middle classes, and the people to the delightful rendezvous of the fête. All ranks were blended, all went pell-mell; I have never seen a crowd more singularly diversified, or present a more touching medley of all conditions. Ordinarily, the public of this sort of fêtes belongs to one class only, with a slight sprinkling of modest burgesses; that is all: rarely are there people with equipages, more rarely still any courtiers. Here, there was everything. There were no people so humble that they could not give themselves the satisfaction of elbowing a countess or some other noble denizen of the faubourg Saint-Germain. All Paris appeared to be at Versailles. That city so fair, but with so sad a beauty, which since the last king seemed widowed of its population; those broad streets where not a person was to be seen; those squares the least of which would contain all the inhabitants of Versailles, and which barely contained the courtiers of the Great King; that magnificent solitude which is

called Versailles, — had suddenly been peopled by the capital. The private houses could not shelter the crowd arriving from all quarters; the park was inundated by promenaders of every age and sex; in those immense alleys people trod on each other's heels; they suffered for lack of air on that vast airy plain; they were crowded on that stage of a great public festivity, as one is at the balls given in those Paris salons which are intended for a dozen persons, and into which vanity squeezes one hundred and fifty.

Great preparations had been going on for four or five days in the delightful gardens of Trianon. But on the eve of the fête the sky had been cloudy; many toilets for which people had been in a hurry were prudently put by; but the next day, a fine blue sky having reassured everybody, they set off for Trianon in spite of souvenirs of the storm which had dispersed the spectators at the fête of Saint-Cloud. Nevertheless, at three o'clock, a copious shower created a momentary fear lest the evening should end badly. *Pluie du soir faisant son devoir* (the afternoon rain doing its duty), as the proverb says. It happened, on the contrary, that this mishap merely embellished the fête, by cooling the burning August atmosphere and laying the incommodious dust. At six o'clock the sun had reappeared, and the summer of 1811 had not a milder or more agreeable evening.

All the architectural lines of the Grand Trianon were ornamented with different-colored lanterns; in

the gallery might be seen six hundred women dazzling with youth and rich attire. The Empress addressed gracious words to several of them, and they were generally enchanted with the affability and amiable manners of a young princess who had lived in France only fifteen months.

At this fête, as at all those of the Empire, there was no lack of poets to chant the praises of those to whom it referred. There was a theatre, and they played a piece written for the occasion, the author of which, M. Alissan de Chazet, I perfectly remember, but whose title I have forgotten. At the close of the piece, the principal artists of the opera executed a ballet which was thought very pretty. The performance over, Their Majesties began their promenade in the park of the Little Trianon. The Emperor, hat in hand, gave his arm to the Empress, and was followed by the entire court. They went, in the first place, to the Isle of Love. All the enchantments of fairyland, all its magic spells, were there united. The temple, rising in the middle of the lake, was magnificently illuminated, and the water reflected its blazing columns. A multitude of elegant barques furrowed in all directions this lake, which seemed on fire, and were manned by a swarm of loves who appeared to be playing in the shrouds. Musicians hidden on board executed melodious airs, and this harmony, at once sweet and mysterious, which seemed to issue from the bosom of the waves, added still more to the magic of the

picture and the charm of the illusion. To this spectacle succeeded scenes of another description; rural scenes; a Flemish tableau, with its good jolly faces and its rustic unrestraint; groups of inhabitants of each French province, which made it appear as if all parts of the Empire had been invited to this fête. In a word, the most diverse spectacles attracted the gaze of Their Majesties by turns. On arriving at the salon of Polyhymnia, they were received by a charming choir, who sang, if I remember, the music of M. Paër and the words of the same M. Alissan de Chazet. At last, after a magnificent supper, which was served in the great gallery, Their Majesties withdrew. It was one o'clock in the morning.

There was but one opinion in this immense assembly concerning the grace and perfect dignity of Marie-Louise. This young princess was, in fact, charming, with singularities rather than defects in her character. I recall certain traits of her domestic life which will not be devoid of interest for the reader.

Marie-Louise said little to the men in her service. Whether this were a custom imported from the Austrian court, or a fear of compromising herself by her foreign accent before persons of inferior condition, or, in fine, timidity or unconcern, very few of those persons have had any words of hers to recollect. I heard her steward say that in three years she never once spoke to him.

The ladies of her household agreed in saying that in private she was kind and gentle. She had very little love for Madame de Montesquiou. It was a mistake; for there were no assiduous cares, attentions, kindnesses which Madame de Montesquiou did not bestow upon the King of Rome. The Emperor was the only one who appreciated that excellent lady, so admirable in every way. As a man, he rated highly the dignity, perfect propriety, and extreme discretion of Madame de Montesquiou. As a father, he was infinitely grateful for the cares she lavished on his son. Every one explained in his own way the coolness displayed toward this lady by the young Empress. Rumors more or less frivolous got into circulation concerning it. The ladies of the palace frequently occupied their leisure moments with this topic. Here is what seems to me the most credible explanation and the most in conformity with the naïve simplicity of Marie-Louise. For lady of honor the Empress had Madame the Duchesse de Montebello, a charming woman, perfectly well conducted. The latter, they said, was afraid of having a rival in the heart of her august friend; and, as a matter of fact, the one she had most to dread was certainly Madame de Montesquiou, for this lady united all the qualities which please and make one beloved. Born of an illustrious family, she had received a distinguished education. To the manners of the best society she joined a solid and enlightened piety. Never had calumny dared

to attack her conduct, which was both noble and well regulated. Not that she was not accused of being somewhat haughty, but this haughtiness was tempered by so cordial a politeness and a kindliness so gracious that one could easily believe it proceeded merely from dignity. She took the tenderest and most assiduous care of the King of Rome, and certainly she whom the most generous devotion afterwards induced to tear herself from her country, her friends, and her family, in order to follow the fortunes of a child all of whose expectations had just been annihilated, had a right to extreme gratitude on the part of the Empress.

Madame de Montebello was accustomed to rise very late. In the morning, when the Emperor was absent, Marie-Louise used to go and chat with her in her chamber, and so as to avoid passing through the salon where the ladies of the palace descended, she would enter the apartment of her lady of honor through a very dark clothes-room,— which greatly wounded those ladies. I heard Josephine say that it was wrong in Madame de Montebello to acquaint the young Empress with several scandalous adventures, true or false, attributed to one of those ladies; that a young wife, simple and pure like Marie-Louise, ought not to know anything about such things, and that this circumstance was the cause of her coldness toward the ladies in her service, who, on their side, did not like her, and who made their sentiments known to their friends and kindred.

Josephine tenderly loved Madame de Montesquiou. As they could not see each other, they wrote: the correspondence lasted until the death of Josephine.

One day Madame de Montesquiou received an order from the Emperor to take the little King to Bagatelle. Josephine was there. She had obtained the favor of seeing this infant whose birth had occasioned festivities all over Europe. It is known how disinterested was Josephine's love for Bonaparte, and how she viewed whatever might augment, and above all consolidate his fortune. Even into the prayers she offered for herself after the signal disgrace of the divorce, there entered the sincere desire that he might be happy in his family life, and that his new spouse might give him that child, that first-born of his dynasty, of which she had been unable to make him the father. This woman of angelic goodness, who fell into a prolonged swoon on learning the sentence of her repudiation, and who, since that day, led a sorrowful life in the brilliant solitude of Malmaison; this devoted wife who had shared for fifteen years all the fortune of her husband, and who had contributed so powerfully to his elevation, — had not been the last to rejoice over the birth of the King of Rome. She used to say that the desire to leave posterity, and to be represented after our death by beings who owe to us their life and the rank they occupy in the world, was a sentiment profoundly graven in the heart of man; that

this natural desire, which she had herself experienced so vividly as wife and mother, this desire of having children who will survive and continue us upon the earth, increased still further when we could transmit a lofty fortune to them; that in the position of Napoleon, the founder of a vast empire, it was impossible that he should long resist a sentiment which lies at the bottom of all hearts, and that, if it is true that it increases in proportion to the heritage one can leave his children, no one should experience it more strongly than Napoleon, because no one had yet possessed so formidable a power on earth; that the course of nature having made her sterility hopeless, she should be the first to immolate the feelings of her heart to the welfare of the State and the personal happiness of Napoleon: sad but powerful reasons which policy had invoked in favor of the divorce, and which the glamour of her devotion induced this excellent princess to believe herself entirely convinced by.

The royal infant was presented to her. I know nothing in the world more touching than the joy of this excellent woman on beholding Napoleon's son. Her eyes as she first gazed upon him were filled with tears; then she took him in her arms and pressed him to her heart with unutterable tenderness. Here there were neither indiscreet witnesses to enjoy a disrespectful curiosity while watching ironically the sentiments of Josephine, nor that ridiculous etiquette which chilled the expression of

her affectionate heart. It was a scene of private life; Josephine lent herself to it with all her soul. By the way in which she caressed this child, you would have thought it was a common baby, and not, as the flatterers said, the son of the Cæsars; not the son of a great man, whose cradle had just been surrounded by so many honors, and who was a king when he came into the world. Josephine bathed him with tears, and spoke to him in that infantine language by which a mother knows how to make herself understood and loved by her new-born babe. At last it was necessary to separate them. The interview had been short, but how well it had been employed by the loving heart of Josephine! It was then one could estimate by her joy the sincerity of her sacrifice, and fathom its extent by the depth of her stifled sighs. Madame de Montesquiou's visits were renewed only at long intervals. Josephine was deeply grieved by this. But the child was growing; an indiscreet word lisped by him, a childish souvenir, the slightest thing, might give umbrage to Marie-Louise, who dreaded Josephine. The Emperor wished to spare himself this contrariety which might disturb his domestic happiness. Hence he ordered that the visits should become less frequent; in the end they were altogether stopped. I heard Josephine say that the birth of the King of Rome paid her for all her sacrifices. Never was a woman's devotion more disinterested or more complete.

Immediately after his birth, the King of Rome had been confided to a nurse of a healthy and robust constitution, selected from the common people. This woman could neither leave the palace nor receive any man: the most rigid precautions had been taken in this respect. She took the airings needful for her health in a carriage, and even then she was accompanied by several women.

This is how Marie-Louise was accustomed to behave toward her son: in the morning, about nine o'clock, the King was carried to his mother's room. She would take him in her arms, caress him a few minutes, then return him to his nurse, and begin to read the newspapers. When the child got tired, the governess would take him away. At four o'clock it was the mother's turn to visit her son. Marie-Louise would go down into the King's apartments, taking with her a little scrap of embroidery at which she worked without paying it much attention. Twenty minutes later, some one would come to tell her that M. Isabey or M. Prudhon had arrived for the drawing or painting lesson. Then the Empress would go back to her own rooms.

Thus elapsed the first months that followed the birth of the King of Rome. In the intervals between fêtes, the Emperor busied himself with decrees, reviews, monuments, projects, taking few relaxations, laboring much, indefatigable in all employments, yet not seeming to have anything wherewith to occupy his powerful mind, and made happy in

his privacy by a young wife by whom he was tenderly beloved. The Empress led a very simple life; that sufficed for her character. Josephine had needed more movement; hence her life was more exterior, more animated, more fashionable. That did not prevent her from being very well adapted to the ways of family life, very affectionate and cordial with her husband, whom she also knew how to make happy in her own way.

One day when Bonaparte came back very much fatigued from hunting, he sent to ask Marie-Louise to come and see him. She came. The Emperor took her in his arms and gave her a hearty kiss on the cheek. Marie-Louise took her handkerchief and wiped it off. "Well, Louise," said the Emperor, "so I disgust thee." "No," replied the Empress; "I have a habit of wiping myself like that; I do the same with the King of Rome." The Emperor seemed dissatisfied. Josephine had been very different: she loved to receive the caresses of her husband, and even sought them. It sometimes happened that the Emperor would say to his young wife: "Louise, sleep in my room." "It is too warm there," the Empress would reply. And, as a matter of fact, she could not endure warmth, and Napoleon's apartments were always heated. She had also an extreme repugnance for odors. Nothing but vinegar or sugar could be burned in her room.

CHAPTER XX

Journey in Flanders and Holland — Refutation of the *Mémoires Contemporains* — Napoleon crosses an arm of the river with the water up to his knees — The miller — The mill paid for — The wounded soldier of Ratisbonne — Boulogne — The English frigate — The conscript's wife — Napoleon crosses the Swine in a fishing-boat — The two fishermen — Kindly action — Marie-Louise at the theatre of Brussels — The personnel of the journey — Preparations in Holland — The Mayor of Bréda — Their Majesties at Brussels — The confiscated goods — Anecdote — The courtiers smuggle — I am described as a smuggler — My justification — Arrival of Their Majesties at Utrecht — The rain and the sight-seers — The review — The harangues — Perfect delicacy of Napoleon — His conduct in Holland — The Hollanders — A ridiculous anecdote — The Emperor's sleeping-room — The night lamp — Entry of Their Majesties into Amsterdam — Napoleon thinks of the expedition to Russia — The piano — The bust of the Emperor Alexander — Visit to Saardam — Peter the Great — Visit to the village of Broek — The Emperor Joseph II. — The King of Rome's first tooth.

IN September, 1811, the Emperor resolved to make a journey to Holland with the Empress, with the purpose of seeing for himself whether his intentions had been faithfully complied with in what concerned both the civil and the religious administrations. Their Majesties left Compiègne on the 19th, and arrived at Montreuil-sur-mer at five o'clock in the evening. I attended the Emperor on this journey. I have read in the *Memorial* of O'Meara

that M. Marchand was then in Napoleon's service. The statement is inexact. M. Marchand did not enter the private service of the Emperor until 1814, at Fontainebleau. His Majesty had ordered me to choose among the apartment waiters an intelligent young man who could assist me in my functions about his person, since none of the ordinary valets de chambre were to remain on the island of Elba. I spoke to the Emperor of M. Marchand, son of a woman who rocked the cradle of the King of Rome, and who possessed all the qualities desirable: His Majesty accepted him, and from that day M. Marchand formed part of the chamber service. He may have made the journey to Holland, but Napoleon did not know him, as his duties did not bring him near His Majesty.

I will recount a part of what I saw during this journey, the details of which are not generally known. Besides, it will give me an opportunity to criticise certain other assertions of the sort I have just referred to, and which I have read with surprise and often with indignation in the *Mémoires Contemporains*. It is important that the public should be perfectly acquainted with all that relates to this journey, and enlightened on certain incidents where calumny has sought to attack the character of Napoleon and occasionally mine. An obscure but strongly attached servant of the Emperor, I must have it at heart to explain all that is doubtful, to refute all that is false, to criticise all that is inexact

in what concerns the judgments passed upon my master and myself. I shall fulfil my duty frankly; I have given some guarantees of that in what has already appeared in my Memoirs.

A little incident took place at Montreuil which it gives me pleasure to recall, because it demonstrates the alacrity with which Napoleon visited the fortifications or embellishments being made in the cities, either in consequence of his direct orders, or of the general impetus he had given to this important branch of public service. After having gone over the works executed during the year in the fortifications of Montreuil, and made the tour of the ramparts, the Emperor repaired to the citadel, afterwards leaving it to go and examine the exterior works. An arm of the river Canche, which laves one of the walls of the city, stopped his way. His entire suite set to work to form a bridge with planks and fascines, but the Emperor, growing impatient, crossed the river with the water up to his knees. The proprietor of a mill on the opposite bank took His Majesty under the arm to assist him in climbing the dike, and profited by the occasion to point out to His Majesty that as his mill was in the line of the projected fortifications, it would necessarily be torn down. His Majesty turned to the engineers and said: "This honest man must be reimbursed for the loss we occasion him." The Emperor continued his examination, and did not re-enter his carriage until he had seen everything at leisure, and talked for

a long time with the civil and military authorities of Montreuil. On the way, a soldier wounded at Ratisbonne was presented to him. His Majesty instantly gave him a gratuity, and ordered that his claim should be presented to him at Boulogne, which he reached on the 20th.

This was the second time that Boulogne had received the Emperor within its walls. Immediately on his arrival he went aboard the fleet and made it go through its manœuvres. An English frigate making a show of coming near to watch what was passing in the roadstead, His Majesty instantly sent out a French frigate, which went full sail toward the unfriendly vessel, but the latter stood out to sea and disappeared. September 29, His Majesty was at Flushing. From Flushing he went to visit the fortifications of Terveere. As he was going through the different works at this place, a young woman threw herself at his feet; her eyes were bathed in tears; with a trembling hand she held out a petition to the Emperor. Napoleon had her kindly raised, and asked the object of her petition. "Sire," said the poor woman, sobbing, "I am the mother of three children whose father is one of Your Majesty's conscripts; the children and their mother are in distress." "Monsieur," said His Majesty to a member of his suite, "take the name of this man; I will make him an officer." The young woman tried to express her gratitude, but emotion and the tears she was shedding prevented her utter-

ing a single word. The Emperor went on with his examination.

Another benevolent action had signalized his departure from Ostend. On leaving that city he followed the Estrau. Not wishing to make the tour by the locks, he jumped into a fishing-boat to cross the Swine, along with his grand equerry, the Duc de Vicenza, Count Lobau, one of his aides-de-camp, and two chasseurs of the guard. Two poor fishermen sailed the barque, which, with all its rigging, was worth five hundred florins. It was all they had. The passage lasted half an hour. His Majesty arrived at Fort Orange, in the island of Cadsan, where he expected the prefect and his suite. The Emperor was wet and had suffered from cold. A great fire was lighted, at which he was very glad to warm himself. The two fishermen were then asked what they would take for the passage, and they replied: "One florin for each passenger." Napoleon ordered them to be brought to him. He had a hundred napoleons counted out to them, and assigned them a life pension of three hundred francs. It would be difficult to imagine the joy of these poor fellows, who were far enough from suspecting what passenger they had taken aboard their barque. When they knew it, the whole country knew it, and it gained Napoleon not a few hearts. Already the Empress Marie-Louise was receiving on his account, at the theatre and in the streets of Brussels, the most animated and sincere applause.

Two months before the arrival of Their Majesties, the people all over Holland had begun to get ready to receive him worthily. There was no little village on the route selected by the Emperor that did not show itself eager to merit his good word by the proportionate magnificence of the welcome His Majesty received there. Nearly the whole court of France made this journey. Great dignitaries, ladies of honor, superior officers, aides-de-camp, chamberlains, equerries, ladies of the bedchamber, quartermasters, kitchen attendants, — none were lacking. Napoleon had wished to dazzle the honest Dutchmen by the magnificence of his court. And, in fact, it was not without its effect upon this population whom his good manners, his affability, and the recital of the benefits with which he strewed his pathway had already won, in spite of some scowling faces which murmured, pipe in mouth, against the trammels laid on commerce by the continental system.

The city of Amsterdam, where the Emperor had intended to remain for some time, suddenly found itself in a state of singular embarrassment. This city had a very extensive palace, but there was neither a coach-house nor a stable connected with it. Now for Napoleon's suite this was a matter of prime necessity. The stables of King Louis, apart from their insufficiency, were in a quarter too remote from the palace for any one to dream of putting up there even a section of the Emperor's

carriages. There was great perplexity in the city, and people put themselves to much trouble to shelter the Emperor's horses. To improvise stables in a few days, at a minute's notice, was impossible. To put up sheds in the middle of the courtyards was ridiculous. Happily, a means of extricating everybody from embarrassment was found by one of the quartermasters of the palace, M. Emery, a very intelligent man, who had learned from Napoleon and from circumstances never to recoil before difficulties. To the great astonishment of the worthy Dutchmen, he hit upon the plan of converting their flower market into coach-houses and stables, and establishing there, under immense tents, the equipages of the Emperor.

I have read in the *Mémoires Contemporains* an anecdote to which it is my duty to give a formal contradiction; here it is:

"The controller of the service, who preceded Their Majesties, received from the Mayor of Bréda a refusal to place at his disposal all that might be necessary in order to carry out his orders. The Mayor, who was entirely devoted to the English party, and somewhat suspicious of the visit of his new sovereign, would do absolutely nothing toward the reception of Napoleon, and the controller was about to draw up an official report of his disobligingness, when the notables of the city prevailed on their first magistrate to display a courtesy which policy imperiously required. It came about, there-

fore, that next day the Mayor, arrayed in his regalia, was charged with complimenting the Emperor on his arrival. Napoleon was on horseback, and the Mayor, dissembling his national ill-humor, delivered his municipal harangue with great pomposity, presenting him at the same time with the keys of the city. But the Emperor, who was aware of the political opinions of the Mayor of Bréda, said to him very cavalierly, kicking the bottom of the plate containing the keys, which fell to the ground: '*Withdraw! Keep your keys to open the doors for your dear friends the English; for my part, I do not need them to enter your city, where I am master.*' "

This anecdote is wholly false; the Emperor, brusque at times, never failed in dignity in a manner so strange, and, I may add, so ridiculous. This may appear an amusing invention to the author of those *Mémoires*, but I must avow that to me it seems as lacking in verisimilitude as in wit.

The Emperor finally rejoined his august spouse at Brussels. His presence there excited universal enthusiasm. By his advice, as delicate as it was politic, Marie-Louise spent one hundred and fifty thousand francs there in laces, in order to revive manufactures. The bringing of English goods into France was at this time strictly prohibited, and whenever they were seized they were burned without mercy. Of the whole system of offensive policy devised by Napoleon against the maritime tyranny of England, there was nothing he had more at heart

than the rigorous observance of the decrees of prohibition. Belgium contained at this time a great quantity of English merchandise, which was carefully concealed, and which everybody was naturally very anxious to obtain, as is always the case with forbidden fruit. All the ladies in the suite of the Empress provided themselves with ample stores, and several carriages were laden with it, not without fear lest it might come to Napoleon's ears and the goods be seized on reaching France. The army carriages of the Emperor crossed the Rhine full of this precious baggage, and reached the gates of Coblentz at the same time. The custom-house officials were in a state of painful uncertainty: ought they to stop the carriages and examine them? ought they not to pass without examination a convoy which seemed to belong to the Emperor? After mature deliberation the majority adopted the latter opinion, and the vehicles freely crossed this first line of French custom houses and brought to a secure haven, Paris to wit, the cargo of prohibited merchandise. If the carriages had been stopped, it is probable that Napoleon would have applauded heartily the courage of the custom-house officers, and that he would have pitilessly burned the confiscated objects.

On the subject of these confiscated goods, I find in the *Mémoires Contemporains* another anecdote which, like the first one, seems to me a pure invention. It concerns me much to criticise this pretended anecdote, in which I am made to play a part

unworthy of my character, and consequently to incur a disgrace which I never did incur. Although it costs me something to entertain the public with matters which concern me only, nevertheless truth demands that I should wholly deny assertions which would pervert the judgment of the reader, and not solely in what relates to Napoleon, whose character in these strange *Mémoires* is gratuitously altered in a thousand ways.

"Marie-Louise," it is there said, "without the Emperor's knowledge, sought to obtain English goods for her own toilet, and to this end a lady of the bedchamber employed the cunningest and most crafty of the sons of Jacob, who made her pay a hundred times the value of all she bought, in order to indemnify themselves against the risks they ran in openly infringing the regulations under Napoleon's very eyes.

"Constant, the first valet de chambre of the Emperor, although he well knew that his master abhorred everything which came from England, was nevertheless so indiscreet as to purchase objects manufactured there; the Emperor was informed of it, and instantly ordered the grand chamberlain and grand marshal to send this smuggler back to France, and turn him out of his employment. Constant, who knew that Marie-Louise had also dabbled in smuggling, appealed to her kindliness to obtain his pardon from Napoleon. In granting it, but not without difficulty, he protested that in future he

would hang from the foremast of the first vessel in the roadstead any one who should infringe his orders."

The whole of this is absolutely false from beginning to end. Is it reasonable to suppose that Marie-Louise should try to obtain English goods secretly, when she knew what a horror the Emperor had of them? Aside from the fact that the young Empress was not the sort of woman to displease her husband in that way, it would have been very difficult to deceive the Emperor, even if such a notion had occurred to Marie-Louise; for he was marvellously quick at distinguishing the places whence the different stuffs which composed her toilet came, and sometimes even presided at the choice she made among them. At that time it was not a little curious to see this man, so powerful and preoccupied with such vast ideas, descending from his lofty sphere even to the details of a chambermaid's business. It was because Bonaparte knew how to be both a great man and a man. Simplicity was as easy to him as grandeur. I never saw him awkward in anything whatever.

As to the paragraph which relates to me, I can only qualify it as a lie. I never smuggled: such a thing was not in my character or my tastes. To abuse my position near the Emperor in order to abandon myself to shameful speculations of that sort, would have been at once absurd and dangerous. Honored with an august good-will, it was more

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unbefitting for me to disobey my master than for any other, and it was, on the contrary, my principle to be the first to subject myself to the restrictions imposed on all, and the more readily if these restrictions had been sacrifices. Hence I cannot do otherwise than formally contradict this passage of the *Mémoires Contemporains*, where the author seems to me to have given himself full swing with all the more complacency because, this anecdote being his own invention, he could indulge freely in developments, very pretty doubtless, but lacking in truth.

The author of these *Mémoires*, not satisfied with having invented a lying anecdote concerning me, and passing me off as a smuggler, has added an insulting note at the bottom of the page, in which he reproaches me with my conduct at Fontainebleau in 1814. He says in this note that after receiving a gratuity of fifty thousand francs from the Emperor to accompany him to the island of Elba, I shamefully abandoned him, while others, without any interested motive, made it a duty to share the fate of the fallen sovereign. In that part of my Memoirs I shall give copious details of what took place: the public will judge. It is not I who will recoil before the truth. Let it suffice me at present to protest loudly against the accusation of ingratitude; it is the only answer I shall make to the author of those *Mémoires*. I return to my narrative.

Their Majesties arrived at Utrecht October 6. All the houses on the quays and streets were decked

with ribbons and garlands. It was raining in torrents. That did not prevent the authorities from being on foot from early morning, nor the people from thronging the streets. In spite of the bad weather, Napoleon had scarcely left the carriage when he mounted a horse and went to review several regiments which were at the gates of Utrecht. He was accompanied by a numerous staff and a rather large crowd of sight-seers, drenched to the bones for the most part. After the review Napoleon returned to the palace, where the entire deputation was awaiting him in an immense unfurnished hall, which had been erected by King Louis. Without changing his clothes, he gave audience to all who were eager to congratulate him, and listened with kindly patience to the harangues addressed to him.

Here again, the author of the *Mémoires Contemporains* has found means to attribute a stupid and gross impropriety to Napoleon. "Napoleon," he says, "returned to his apartments, and feeling fatigued by his ride, went to bed, although he was expected in the dining-hall, where important personages were assembled. He sent the Empress word to go to table without him, with the invited guests. Marie-Louise came to him and urged the embarrassment she would feel amidst so many unknown persons. Napoleon insisted, and the Empress was obliged to dine without the Emperor. They sat down at table, and Heaven knows whether the dinner was gloomy. The Empress could not

hide her ill-humor, and the guests seemed to be scandalized by the Emperor's conduct. They were much more so when Napoleon appeared, after his siesta, in a simple morning coat and slippers." Then follow some very philosophic reflections and a citation of two lines, which I spare the reader. Like the former ones, the whole of this story is embellished with details; it is unfortunate that it should be so in vain, for the anecdote is as unlikely as ridiculous. At no time would the Emperor have permitted himself so gross a violation of the proprieties. In no country would he have so gratuitously embittered the superior classes by displaying an unbecoming disdain for high functionaries invited to his table by his chamberlain in his name. He had not merely too much tact, but also too much intelligence to forget himself in such a way. But above all in Holland, in a country which had just passed under his domination, and where he counted only subjects of a day; in Holland, where he had more need than anywhere else of that affability which attaches conquered peoples to their conqueror; in Holland, where he had spared nothing, made himself cheap, almost coquetted, in order to neutralize, by winning hearts, the distressing but inevitable effects of his commercial measures; is it credible that he would have permitted himself so unseasonable a discourtesy, that he would voluntarily have given rise to all the unfavorable interpretations which would infallibly have resulted from

this strange conduct? Is it credible that he would have insulted, in the person of its high functionaries, a good but susceptible people, and one all the more sensitive to the insult because it knew that certain dandies of the French court laughed at its simplicity?

On the heels of this anecdote, we read that which follows: "Wherever Napoleon might be, the valet de chambre on duty was careful to see that a bath was ready for him at all hours, and for that purpose there was a furnace boy whose only business was to keep the water continually at the temperature known to suit the Emperor.

"At Utrecht, Napoleon occupied on the ground-floor the sleeping-room of his brother Louis, which adjoined the bath-room. The evening of his arrival, when the Emperor had gone to bed, the furnace boy, although worn out by fatigue, and drenched like most of the other servants, prepared the bath and then lay down in a cabinet next to that containing the bath-tub. During the night, he wanted to go out, but he did not know the localities; half-asleep, he caught a glimpse of a small door, turned the handle gently, entered, and there he was, groping about for another exit. He fell against a chair; at the noise he made a loud voice, which he recognized well as belonging to the Emperor, called out: 'Who is there?' His mistake confused the fellow, made him lose his head, and paralyzed his tongue. In the darkness he touched and disar-

ranged other pieces of furniture in the vain effort to find the door by which he entered. The Emperor repeated his question in a louder tone, and supposing that some one was trying to surprise him in his bed, he slipped out of it, seized a big silver watch that always hung at the head of his bedstead, and succeeded in taking by the collar the unlucky furnace boy, who was more dead than alive, and whom Napoleon, startled out of his first sleep, suspected of an attempt on his life, to say the least. He called, he shouted, he swore; at the noise he made, the valet de chambre on duty ran up with a light, and found the Emperor of the French almost at fisticuffs with a poor devil who, vigorously choked, yet without daring to defend himself, was trying to wriggle out of his adversary's hands. To the valet de chambre succeeded the chamberlain on duty, then the aide-de-camp, the grand marshal, a prefect of the palace, and in an instant the whole court was on foot. Before the truth was known, a thousand conjectures, one still more improbable than another, had been made concerning this event. Some one, it was said, had made an attempt to abduct Napoleon, and tried to kill him, but he had stifled the assassin. The fact is, that if he had had weapons, he would have tried to blow out the brains of the person who had awakened him in that style, and whom he really gave nothing but several blows with that big watch he had taken to defend himself with."

I scruple to gainsay an anecdote in which the

laudable desire to be amusing makes itself felt in every phrase. But I am publishing these Memoirs to tell the truth in the slightest matters, and although that may cost the author of the *Mémoires Contemporains* a couple of pages, I take the liberty of contradicting him by this very simple response: In the first place, Roustan and a valet de chambre invariably slept in the room which led into the apartment of the Emperor, and through which he could be approached; in the second place, there was always a night lamp burning in His Majesty's sleeping chamber.

The entry of Their Majesties into Amsterdam was extremely brilliant. The Empress, in a chariot drawn by magnificent horses, preceded by several hours the Emperor, who was to make his entry on horseback. He presently made his appearance, surrounded by a brilliant staff, who advanced at a slow pace, glittering with embroideries, amidst the cries of astonishment and enthusiasm uttered by the honest Hollanders. Through the simplicity of his own dress there was perceptible a profound satisfaction, and perhaps a just sentiment of pride in beholding the welcome obtained for him by his glory, here as elsewhere, and the universal sympathy which his presence excited in the masses. A tricolored drapery of excellent effect, suspended from posts planted at intervals, decorated the streets through which Their Majesties were to pass, and he who, three years later, was to enter the palace of the

Tuileries by night, as a fugitive, after a great deal of trouble in getting the doors opened for him, was still passing under triumphal arches with a glory yet virgin of defeats and a fortune that still was faithful. These comparisons make me sad; but they occur to my mind despite myself, no single year of the Empire having been signalized by more fêtes, more triumphal entries, more popular rejoicings, than the year which preceded the misfortunes of 1812.

A part of the actors of the Théâtre-Français of Paris had followed the court to Holland. Talma played there the rôles of Bayard and Arosmane. M. Alissan de Chazet had a timely vaudeville in honor of Their Majesties performed by the French comedians of Amsterdam; I forget the title of it. Here again I must criticise an equally false assertion of the author of the *Mémoires Contemporains* relative to the pretended liaison between the Emperor and Mademoiselle Bourgoin. I cite the passage: "Mademoiselle Bourgoin, one of the delegates from the court of Thalia to the journey in Holland, Mademoiselle Bourgoin, being rattle-headed, had, so they say, succumbed to the temptation of making some indiscreet revelations, even loudly flattering herself on being able to attract the Emperor to the theatre when she should play. These little boasts, which were not at all those of virtue, came to the ears of the Emperor, who would not appear at the theatre. He charged Talma, for whom he had a great liking,

to induce the fair actress to hold her tongue, and to assure her that on the slightest indiscretion she would be sent back to France under a good escort." This does not agree very well with what His Majesty said one day to the Emperor Alexander concerning this actress when they were staying at Erfurt. Those words, which the author of the *Mémoires* must have remembered, prove that the Emperor had no intentions with regard to her. There is another thing which proves it even better still, and that is the great discretion he always maintained on the chapter of amours.

Throughout the Holland voyage, the Emperor showed himself kindly, affable, receiving every one, and speaking to each in a suitable manner. Never did anybody behold him more amiable or more eager to please. He visited the manufactories, inspected the dockyards, reviewed the troops, made speeches to the sailors, and accepted the balls that were offered him in all the cities through which he passed. In this life of pleasures and seeming distractions he was almost more active than in the serious and unquiet atmosphere of camps. He was gracious and polite to his new subjects, and talked to everybody. But in these excursions, amidst these fêtes, in all this racket of the cities which came to meet him or acted as his escort, under these triumphal arches, erected for him sometimes at the entry of an obscure village, his mind was more serious than ever, and his soul more anxious, for from this time

he was dreaming of his expedition to Russia. It may be that there entered into this amenity of manners, this graciousness, these benevolent actions, the better part of which, moreover, was characteristic of him, the design of preparing in advance some ameliorations of the discontent which this expedition must produce; perhaps, by attaching hearts to his person, by putting forth all his means of pleasing, he thought to win his pardon by enthusiasm for a war which, no matter how it resulted, must cost the Empire so much blood, so many tears.

During the sojourn of Their Majesties at Amsterdam, a piano had been placed in the cabinet of the Empress, which was so constructed as to give the effect of a secretary divided in the middle. In this space a small bust of the Emperor of Russia had been set. A few minutes afterward, the Emperor desired to see whether the Empress were well lodged. In examining the apartment, he perceived this bust, and taking it down, he put it under his arm without saying a word. He said afterwards to one of the Empress's ladies that he wished to have the bust removed. He was obeyed, but this created astonishment; for no one as yet believed that there was a misunderstanding between the two emperors.

Some days after his arrival at Amsterdam, the Emperor undertook to make several excursions in the country, accompanied by a not very numerous suite. At Saardam he visited the thatched cabin which for some time sheltered Peter the Great when

he came to Holland, under the name of Peter Michaëloff, to study the art of construction. After remaining there a quarter of an hour, the Emperor said, as he came out, to his grand marshal of the palace: "That is the finest monument in Holland." The day before, Her Majesty the Empress had been to visit the village of Broek, of which North Holland is as proud as if it were a marvel. Nearly all the houses in this village are built of wood and but one story high. The boards which garnish their fronts are adorned with different paintings according to the whim of the proprietors. These paintings are very well cared for, and remain in a state of perfect freshness. The window-panes, of very fine glass, allow one to see curtains of figured China silk, painted muslins, and other Indian stuffs. The streets are paved with bricks and very clean; they are washed and scoured regularly, and covered with very fine white sand, with which different figures are imitated, especially flowers. Posts set at the two ends of the village bear inscriptions forbidding vehicles to enter the village, the houses of which resemble from a distance the toys of children. Beasts are cared for by hirelings at a certain distance, and there is even, beyond the village, an inn for strangers, who are not allowed to lodge within its precincts. On the front of some of the houses, I noticed either a parterre, or a certain arrangement of colored sands and shells; sometimes little statues in painted wood, sometimes bushes cut into odd

shapes. There is nothing, even to the dishes, and the handles of the brooms, which is not painted in diverse colors and attended to like the rest of the house. The inhabitants carry cleanliness so far as to oblige those who come into their houses to lay aside their shoes and put on the slippers which are at the door and intended for this singular use. This fact reminds one of an anecdote about the Emperor Joseph. This prince presented himself in boots at the door of a house in Broek, and being asked to change them before entering, he said: "I am the Emperor." "If you were the burgomaster of Amsterdam," replied the master of the house, "you could not come in here in boots." The good Emperor put on the slippers.

During the journey in Holland, Their Majesties were informed that the King of Rome had cut his first tooth. The health of the august infant had not suffered from this first labor of dentition.

In one of the small villages of North Holland the notables requested the Emperor's permission to present to him a man aged one hundred and one years. He ordered him to be brought. He was still vigorous and had formerly served in the guards of the Stadtholder. He presented a petition to the Emperor, asking him to exempt from the conscription one of his grandsons, the support of his old age. His Majesty replied through an interpreter that he would not deprive him of his grandson, and Marshal Duroc was charged to leave the poor old man a

testimonial of the imperial liberality. In another little village of Friesland, the authorities made this singular address to the Emperor: "Sire! we were afraid to see you with all the court; you are almost alone; we can see you all the better and more at our ease. Long live the Emperor!" The Emperor applauded this loyal felicitation, and thanked the orator in an affecting manner. After this long journey, passed in festivities, reviews, and pomps of every description, the Emperor, meanwhile, though preserving an air of amusement, making profound observations on the moral, commercial, and military situation of Holland, — observations which resulted on his return to Paris, and even while in that country, in wise and useful decrees,—Their Majesties quitted Holland by way of Haarlem, the Hague, and Rotterdam, where they were welcomed, as elsewhere in the country, by fêtes. They crossed the Rhine, visited Cologne-la-Chapelle, and arrived at Saint-Cloud in the early part of November, 1811.

CHAPTER XXI

Marie-Louise — Her portrait — What she was in private and in public — Her relations with the ladies of the court — Her character — Her sensitiveness — Her education — She detested idleness — How she gained her knowledge of public affairs — Comparison with Josephine — Beneficence of Marie-Louise — The sum she devoted monthly to the poor — Napoleon affected by her beneficent actions — How she spent the day — Her first breakfast — Her morning toilet — Her visits to Madame de Montebello — She plays billiards — Her excursions on horseback — Portrait of the Emperor Francis — The King of Rome — His character — His goodness — Quarrel between the little King and Albert Froment — The woman in mourning and the little boy — Docility of the King of Rome — His fits of anger — The Emperor and his son — Grimaces before the mirror — The three-cornered hat — The Emperor plays with the little King on the grass-plot at Trianon — The little King in the council hall — The little King and the usher — *A king ought not to be afraid* — Singular caprice of the King of Rome.

MARIE-LOUISE was a very beautiful woman. Her figure was majestic, her bearing noble, her complexion very fresh, her hair blonde, and her eyes blue and full of expression; her feet and hands were the admiration of the court; but she was possibly a little too plump. She lost a little flesh during her stay in France, but it is true to say that she gained its equivalent in grace and beauty.

Such she was in her exterior. In her relations

with those who formed her most habitual society, she was affable and expansive: then all the happiness she experienced in the freedom of these conversations was depicted in her face, which became animated, and assumed an infinite grace. But on the occasions when she was obliged to receive company she became extremely timid. Fashionable society seemed to isolate her from herself, and as persons not by nature lofty are always ungracious when they try to seem so, Marie-Louise, who was invariably much embarrassed on reception days, frequently gave rise to rather unjust remarks; for, as I have said, her coldness really sprang from an excessive timidity.

It was when she first arrived in France that this air of embarrassment was most evident. That can be readily imagined on the part of a princess suddenly transported into a new society whose tastes and customs she is bound to assume. And besides, although her high position ought naturally to attract people to her, she is obliged to make some advances toward them. This explains the stiffness of her first relations with the ladies of the court. But when meetings of this sort had become more frequent, and the young Empress had made her selections in free compliance with her heart, then the grand airs of coolness were reserved solely for grand occasions. Marie-Louise was of a calm and reflective character. Little was needed to awaken her sensibilities, and yet, though easily affected, she was not very demonstrative. The Empress had received a very careful

education. Her mind was cultivated and her tastes very simple. She had every faculty of pleasing; she detested those vapid hours which pass in idleness. Hence she liked to be occupied, because her tastes inclined her that way, and also because she saw in the good employment of time the sole means of avoiding ennui. I think she was undoubtedly the woman to suit the Emperor. She was too fond of her own home life to meddle with political intrigues, and often all she knew of public affairs, she, empress and queen, was what she read in the newspapers. The Emperor, at the close of his perturbed days, could nowhere find a little relaxation but in a peaceful home which recalled him to the happiness of the family. An intriguing woman, a political chatterer, would have annoyed him.

Still the Emperor sometimes complained of the lack of amiability displayed by the new Empress toward the ladies of the court. He was the sufferer from her excessive reserve in a country where, perhaps, we err by the opposite excess; and that is why he sometimes thought a little about the past, about the Empress Josephine, whose unalterable gaiety was what made the court charming. He must have been struck by the contrast, but was there not, after all, a trifle of injustice in the thought? The Empress Marie-Louise was the daughter of an emperor; she had seen and known none but courtiers, and common people not at all. Hence her sympathies did not go beyond the walls of the palace of Vienna.

One fine day she had arrived at the Tuileries, amidst a people whom she had never seen except in military uniforms: this is why the stiffness of her manners with the persons composing the brilliant society of Paris, seems to me excusable to a certain point. It appears, moreover, that the Empress had been habituated to a rigorous plainness of speech and absence of affectation totally out of place. By dint of repeatedly enjoining her to be natural, they had impeded in her that easy compliance with established customs so befitting in great personages, who cannot be sought unless they make the first advances. The Empress Josephine loved the people because she had belonged to them. On ascending a throne, her native kindliness had everything to gain, because it found a wider field.

Being so good as she was, the Empress Marie-Louise must have tried to make others happy. People will long talk of her beneficence, and above all of her delicate way of doing good. Every month she laid aside ten thousand francs for the poor from the sum appropriated to her toilet. Nor did her charities stop there; she always welcomed with keen interest all who spoke to her of unfortunate persons to be assisted. By the alacrity with which she went to listen to solicitors, you would have thought she had suddenly been reminded of a duty: and yet it was merely the sensitive chord of her heart that had been touched.

I do not know whether any one ever met a refusal

from her for requests of this description. The Emperor was profoundly moved whenever he heard of one of her beneficent actions.

At eight o'clock in the morning the curtains were drawn aside and the blinds half opened in the apartment of the Empress Marie-Louise; the journals were handed to her and she ran them over. Next she was served with chocolate or coffee, and a sort of pastry which was called *conque;* she took this first breakfast in bed. At nine o'clock Marie-Louise arose, made her morning toilet, and received those persons who had a right to the little receptions. When the Emperor was absent, the Empress went up every day into the apartment of Madame de Montebello. At eleven o'clock she breakfasted, nearly always alone, and then occupied herself with music or some little piece of work; sometimes she played billiards. At two o'clock she rode, or else went out in a carriage with Madame de Montebello, her lady of honor, followed by her attendants, who comprised a chevalier of honor and several ladies of the palace. On returning to her apartments after this promenade, she ate a light repast of pastry and fruits. After taking her lessons in drawing, painting, and music, she began her grand toilet. Between six and seven o'clock she dined with the Emperor, or in his absence with Madame de Montebello. The dinner comprised but one course. The evening was spent in receptions, concerts, plays, etc. The Empress retired at eleven o'clock. One of her women always slept in the

apartment which preceded the bedchamber; and the Emperor had to pass this lady whenever he wished to sleep with Marie-Louise.

When the Emperor was present, the habitudes of the Empress were sometimes unsettled; but when alone, she was punctual in everything and did exactly the same things at the same hours. Her private attendants seemed much attached to her. She was cold and grave, but they found her good and just.

In the Emperor's absence, the portrait of the Duchesse de Montebello adorned the chamber of the Empress, with those of all the members of the Austrian imperial family. When the Emperor returned, the portrait of the Duchess was withdrawn; during the war that took place between the Emperor and the Emperors of Austria and Russia, the portrait of Francis was removed from his daughter's apartment by His Majesty's orders, and was, I think, put into penitential retirement in some hidden place.

The King of Rome was a very handsome child; but he resembled the Emperor less than the son of Queen Hortense did. His features presented a very agreeable blending of those of his father and mother. I knew him only in his early childhood. What was most noticeable in him at that age was a great goodness and strong attachment for those who surrounded him. He was very fond of a young and pretty person, the daughter of a first lady, Mademoiselle Fanny Soufflot, who seldom quitted him.

He always wanted to see her well-dressed, and would ask the Empress Marie-Louise, or his governess, Madame the Countess de Montesquiou, for trifling pieces of finery which he thought pretty, and wished to give to his young friend. He made her promise to follow him to war when he should be big, and addressed her in those charming words which portray a kindly heart.

A young child, likewise belonging to a first lady, had been left with *the little King* (as he called himself); I think it was Albert Froment. One morning when they were playing together in the garden on which the King's apartment at Saint-Cloud opened, with Mademoiselle Fanny Soufflot watching them, but not interfering with their plays, Albert wanted the King's wheelbarrow. The latter would not give it up, and Albert struck him. The King said to him at once: "If any one saw thee! but I won't tell." I believe this trait was characteristic.

One day he was at the windows of the château with his governess, greatly amused in watching the people go by, and pointing out to her with his finger all that most attracted his attention. In looking down below his windows, he saw a woman in mourning who held by the hand a little boy of three or four years. This child had a petition in his hand which he was showing to the prince, and seemed entreating him to receive it. The black clothes puzzled the young prince greatly. He asked his governess *why that poor little fellow was*

dressed all in black. "Doubtless because his father is dead," replied the governess. The child displayed a great desire to speak to the little solicitor. Madame de Montesquiou, who had it greatly at heart to encourage this disposition to benevolence on the part of her young pupil, gave orders to have the mother and child brought upstairs. This woman was the widow of a brave man who had been killed in the last campaign. His loss had reduced her to want; she was soliciting a pension from the Emperor. The young prince took the petition and promised to hand it to his papa. The next day he went as usual to pay his respects to his father, and give him all the petitions of the day before with which he was charged; one only was kept apart; it was that of his little protégé. "Papa," said he to his father, "this is the petition of a little boy whose father is dead because of thee; give him a pension." Napoleon, much affected, embraced his son. The warrant for the pension was sent that day. Here, beyond all contradiction, is the token of a soul that was excellent betimes.

His first education was very easy. Madame de Montesquiou had acquired a great empire over him. She owed it to the manner, at once grave and gentle, in which she reprimanded him whenever he committed any fault. The child was usually docile; and yet he had at times violent fits of anger. His governess had adopted an excellent means of correcting him for them; it was to remain impassible,

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allowing his little furies to quiet down of themselves. When the child came to her, an observation made with severity and unction would make a little Cato of him for all the rest of the day. One day when he was rolling on the ground and screaming, without paying any attention to the remonstrances of his governess, she closed the outside shutters and the windows. The child, much astonished at this alteration in the appearance of the room, forgot what had annoyed him, and asked her why she did that. "I am afraid lest any one might hear you," she replied; "do you think the French would have a prince like you, if they knew you put yourself into such a temper?" "Dost thou suppose any one heard me?" he exclaimed; "I would be very sorry for that. Pardon, *Mamma Quiou* [that was what he called her]; I won't do it again."

The Emperor passionately loved his son; he would take him in his arms every time he saw him, lift him forcibly from the ground, put him down, take him up again, and amuse himself greatly with his joy. He would tease him, carry him in front of a mirror and often make a thousand grimaces at which the child would laugh till he cried. When he was breakfasting, he would take him on his knee, dip a finger into the sauce, make him suck it, and daub his face with it. The governess would scold, the Emperor laugh more heartily, and the child, who enjoyed the game, demand in noisy joy that his father should repeat it. This was the propitious moment

for petitions to arrive at the château. They were always well received, thanks to the all-powerful credit of the little mediator.

The Emperor, in his caresses, was sometimes more childish than his son. The young prince was only four months old when his father would put his three-cornered hat on the pretty nursling. The infant would usually cry; and then the Emperor, embracing him with a force and pleasure which none but an affectionate father can feel, would say: "What, Sire, you are crying! A king, a king cry! fie; that is villanous!" He was a year old when one day at Trianon, on a grass-plot in front of the château, I saw the Emperor who had put his sword-belt on the shoulder of the King and his hat on his head. He placed himself at a short distance, holding out his arms to the child, who tottered forward until he reached him. Sometimes his little feet would get entangled in his father's sword. Then you should see the promptness with which His Majesty would extend his arms to save him from a fall.

Once, in his cabinet, the Emperor was lying on the carpet; the King, striding across his knees, would go by jumps as far as his father's face, and then embrace him. Another time the child went into the salon of the Council, which was just over. The councillors and ministers were still there. The King ran into his father's arms without paying attention to any one else. The Emperor said to him, "Sire, you have not saluted these gentlemen." The child

turned round, saluted with grace, and his father lifted him in his arms. When he came to see the Emperor, he would run into the apartment in a way that left Madame de Montesquiou far behind. He would say to the cabinet usher: "Open the door for me, I want to see papa." The usher would reply: "Sire, I cannot open it." "But I am the little King." "No, Sire, I will not open it." While this was going on, his governess would arrive, and proud then of her protection, he would say: "Open, the little King desires it."

Madame de Montesquiou had made the child end his morning and evening prayers with these words: "My God, inspire papa to make peace for the welfare of France." One day when the Emperor was present at his son's bedtime, he made the same prayer. The Emperor embraced him, said nothing, but smiled in a manner full of kindliness as he looked at Madame de Montesquiou.

The Emperor would say to the King of Rome when he had frightened him by his noise and his grimaces: "How's this! how's this! a king ought not to be afraid."

I remember another anecdote concerning the Emperor's young son, which was told me by His Majesty himself one evening, when I was undressing him as usual. The Emperor laughed heartily over it. "You would never guess," said he to me, "the singular recompense that my son has requested from his governess for having been very good. He wanted

her to let him go and dabble in the mud!" The thing was true, and it seems to me to prove that the grandeurs with which the cradles of princes are surrounded is not sufficient to destroy the strange oddity often found in the caprices of children.

CHAPTER XXII

The Abbé Geoffroy receives a thrashing — The Emperor's remark concerning it — M. Corvisart — His frankness — He insists on his orders being obeyed — M. Corvisart in high repute with the Emperor — He speaks warmly for M. de Bourrienne — His Majesty's reply — Cardinal Fesch — His volubility — A remark of the Emperor — Count de Lavalette — The diamonds — Josephine sends for me to Malmaison — She recommends me to be careful of the Emperor — She makes me promise to write to her — She gives me her portrait — The deserter — He is brought before the Emperor — Who he was — Russian discipline — The Emperor enters a Russian city escorted by two Cossacks — Cossacks off their horses — They drink brandy like water — Murat — With one movement of his sabre he makes a horde of Cossacks recoil — Laxity in the police of the French bivouacs — Dissatisfaction of the Emperor — His threat — Promenade of His Majesty before the battle of Moscow — The portrait of the King of Rome brought to the Emperor — It is shown to the officers and soldiers of the Old Guard — The Emperor ill — Death of Comte Auguste de Caulaincourt — His tears when he learned the death of Lannes — The Emperor's remark concerning General Ordener — The Emperor goes over the battle-field of the Moskowa — His emotion on hearing the cries of the wounded — Anecdote — Exclamation of the Emperor during the night that succeeded the battle.

EVERYBODY has heard of the Abbé Geoffroy, of satiric memory, and of those *feuilletons* which were the despair of the authors and actors most in vogue at this epoch. This pitiless Aristarchus must have been heartily in love with his

captious profession, for he sometimes risked upon it, not his life, as many people might have desired, but at all events his health and his repose. No doubt it is all very well to attack those who can defend themselves with the pen; then the consequences of the tilt do not go beyond the ridicule which frequently results for both adversaries. But the Abbé Geoffroy fulfilled only one of the conditions in virtue of which one may be a spiteful critic; there was a great deal of gall in his style, but he was not a man of the sword. Now, it is known that there are people before whom it is not safe to present one's self without both these arguments.

One of those actors whom the Abbé Geoffroy had not precisely spoiled by praise, desired to avenge himself in a piquant manner which would make people laugh for a long time. One evening, at the close of the play, foreseeing perhaps what he might expect in the next day's *feuilleton*, no better plan occurred to him than that of abducting the terrible Geoffroy after he left the theatre and taking him blindfolded into a house, where he would inflict upon him, a master in the art of writing, the punishment of a schoolboy. Thus it fell out: at the instant when the Abbé was regaining his lodgings, rubbing his hands perhaps as some biting expression occurred to him for the next day's paper, three or four vigorous fellows seized and carried him, without saying a word, to the place of torment. That same evening

the Abbé, soundly flagellated, opened his eyes in the middle of the street, where he found himself alone and far away from his domicile. The Emperor, to whom this pretty trick was mentioned, did not find it laughable in the least. Far from that, he flew into a rage, and said that if he knew the author of this iniquitous deed of violence, he would have him punished. "When a man attacks with the pen," he added, "he should be replied to in the same way." The truth is, moreover, that the Emperor liked Geoffroy very much, and would not have his *feuilletons* submitted to censorship, like those of other journalists. They said in Paris that this predilection of a great man for a venomous critic arose from the fact that the *feuilletons* of the Journal of the Empire, to which people paid much attention at this period, were a useful diversion afforded to the wits of the capital. I do not know anything positive about this, but when I remember the character of the Emperor, who was unwilling to have people concern themselves with his policy, these rumors do not appear to me entirely without foundation.

Doctor Corvisart was no courtier. He seldom came except on his appointed days, which were Wednesday and Saturday. He was very plain-spoken with the Emperor, insisted on his injunctions being carried out to the letter, and made an extensive use of that right which all physicians have to scold neglectful patients. The Emperor particularly liked him, and always detained him, seeming to enjoy his conversa-

tion. One Saturday, in 1811, after the journey to Holland, M. Corvisart came to see the Emperor, whom he found in very good health. After the toilet he went away at once to his country-seat, to indulge in the pleasure of hunting, which he was prodigiously fond of. It was a habit of his never to tell any one at home where he was going, so as not to be disturbed for trifles, as had already happened to him; for in other things the Doctor was full of obligingness and devotion.

One day after his breakfast, which as usual he ate very fast, the Emperor was suddenly attacked by a violent colic and general uneasiness. He asked for M. Corvisart, and a courier was sent at once in search of him. Not finding him in Paris, he spurred his horse and went on to the Doctor's country-seat; but the Doctor was out hunting, and no one knew in what direction. The courier came back without him. The Emperor was extremely annoyed; he was suffering much. Finally he went to bed, and Marie-Louise came to spend some minutes beside him. M. Yvan, having been summoned, prescribed something, and the Emperor got better.

M. Corvisart, uneasy perhaps, came on Monday instead of Wednesday. When he entered Napoleon's chamber, the latter, who was in his dressing-gown, ran up to him, and taking him by the two ears, said: "Well, Monsieur, so if I were seriously ill, I should be obliged to get along without your assistance!"

M. Corvisart excused himself, asked what the

Emperor had suffered, what he had taken, and promised thereafter to leave word at his house where he would be, so that he could be found on the first notification from His Majesty, who was soon pacified. So the Doctor profited likewise, since he corrected himself of a bad habit. It is probable that his patients thought well of it.

M. Corvisart was in immense repute with the Emperor. Hence many people who knew this preferred to charge the Doctor with their petitions. He seldom failed to obtain the requests he occasionally made of the Emperor. Still, I have often heard him speak warmly of M. de Bourrienne in order to make the Emperor understand that he was greatly attached to him; but His Majesty always replied: "No, Bourrienne is too English. And for the rest, he is well off; I have placed him at Hamburg. He loves money, and he can get it there."

It was during the year 1811 that Cardinal Fesch came oftenest into the Emperor's chamber. It seemed to me that their discussions were very lively. The Cardinal adhered strongly to his opinions, and talked in a very loud tone and with great volubility. It would not be five minutes before the conversation became somewhat acrimonious. Then I would hear the Emperor raise his voice proportionately. Rather frequently there would be an interchange of bitter speeches; and whenever I saw the Cardinal arrive, I could not avoid pitying the Emperor, who was always much agitated at the close of

these discussions. One day, just as the Cardinal was taking leave of the Emperor, I heard the latter say harshly: "Cardinal, you belong thoroughly to your class."

Several days before our departure for Russia, the Emperor sent for me in the daytime, and told me to go to the treasury and take from it the coffer of diamonds, deposit it in his chamber, and then not to absent myself, as he might have need of me. Toward nine o'clock in the evening I was summoned, and found M. the Count de Lavalette, postmaster-general, in the chamber of the Emperor. His Majesty opened the coffer in my presence, examined its contents, and said to me: "Constant, carry this coffer yourself into M. the Count's carriage, and stay there until he arrives." The carriage was at the foot of the great flight of steps, in the court of the Tuileries. I had it opened, and got into it. I waited until half-past eleven for M. de Lavalette to arrive. I cannot explain to myself the reason for this precaution of giving the diamonds to M. de Lavalette. But it was certainly not without a motive.

The coffer contained: the sword in whose pommel the *regent* was set (the hilt was enriched with very costly diamonds); the grand collar of the Legion of Honor, the stars, the hat-band, the unfringed epaulette, the buttons of the coronation coat, the buckles of the shoes and garters, — all objects of immense price.

A little while before we set out for Russia, the Empress Josephine sent for me. I went at once to Malmaison, where this excellent woman again pressed upon me the most urgent precautions concerning the Emperor's health and safety. She made me promise that if the least accident befell him, I would write to her, as she wished above all to be sure of knowing the truth. She wept a great deal, talked constantly about the Emperor, and after an interview that lasted more than an hour, and in which she gave full vent to her sensibility, she presented me with her portrait, painted by Saint on a gold snuff-box. My heart was heavy when I came out from this interview. Nothing, in fact, was more affecting than this woman, disgraced and yet always loving, anxious for the man who had abandoned her, and, better than that, interesting herself for him as the most tenderly loved wife would have done.

On entering Russia, a thing I speak of here in accordance with the order of my souvenirs rather than with that of time, the Emperor despatched attendants from the picked gendarmerie on three different routes, in order to prepare lodgings, beds, canteens, etc., in advance. These were M. Sarrazin, adjutant lieutenant, Verges, Molène, and Lieutenant Pachot. Besides, I shall devote an entire chapter later on to our itinerary from Paris to Moscow.

Some time before the battle of the Moskowa, a man was brought into camp wearing a Russian coat, but speaking French; at least, there was a singular

medley of Russian and French in his language. This man had furtively escaped from the enemies' lines; when he perceived that our soldiers were at a very short distance from him, he had left the ranks and thrown away his musket, exclaiming with a very strongly marked Russian accent: "I am a Frenchman." Our soldiers had made him prisoner.

Never was a prisoner more enchanted with his change of domicile. The poor wretch seemed to have taken arms in the service of his country's foes entirely against his will, and he declared himself the happiest of men when he arrived in the French camp, because he had found his compatriots once more. He shook hands with all our soldiers with a freedom that pleased everybody. He was led to the Emperor; he seemed greatly intimidated on finding himself in the presence of *The King of the French*, as he styled His Majesty. The Emperor interrogated him a long time. He said that the sound of the French cannon had always made his heart beat; that he had dreaded only one thing, namely, to be killed by his own countrymen. According to what he told the Emperor, he appeared to be one of those men, of whom there are so many, who find themselves transported to a foreign land by their family without ever thoroughly understanding the reasons for their emigration. His father had carried on some low kind of mechanical occupation in Moscow, and had died leaving him without resources or prospects. To gain his bread he had

become a soldier. He said that the Russian military discipline was one of the great reasons which had incited him to desert. He added that he had courage and strong arms, and that he could serve in the French army, if its general would permit. His candor pleased the Emperor, who desired to obtain from him some positive information as to the state of public feeling in Moscow. It was learned from his more or less intelligible revelations, that a great agitation was prevalent in this ancient capital. He said you could hear people shouting in the streets: "Enough of Barclay! Down with the traitor! the coward! Long live Kutusoff!" The merchant class, which had great influence, because it was generally the most wealthy, complained of a temporizing system which left things in an unsettled condition and compromised the honor of the Russian arms. They could not forgive the Emperor for placing confidence in a foreigner while old Kutusoff, who had the blood and soul of a Russian, occupied a secondary position. The Emperor Alexander had not heeded these energetic remonstrances. Finally, however, alarmed by the symptoms of revolt that were manifested in his army, he had yielded. Kutusoff was appointed generalissimo. Moscow had been illuminated in rejoicing over this important event. A great battle with the French was spoken of; enthusiasm was at its height in the Russian army; every soldier had a green branch attached to his shako. The prisoner spoke of Kutusoff with

dread. He said he was a white-haired old man, with big moustaches and eyes that made one tremble; that he was very far from dressing like the French generals; that his coats were very ordinary, though he might have such fine ones; that he roared like a lion when he was angry; that he never marched without having recited his prayers, and that he frequently crossed himself at different hours of the day. "The soldiers like him very much," he added, "because they say he resembles Suwarrow; I am afraid he will do the French a great deal of harm." The Emperor, satisfied with this information, dismissed the prisoner and gave orders that he should be allowed to circulate freely in the camp. Later on he fought bravely with our soldiers.

The Emperor made his entry into Glatz with a most singular escort. In a skirmish several Cossacks had been taken. His Majesty, who was just then very eager for information, from whatever source it might proceed, desired to question these savages. He had them brought to headquarters two or three times. These men seem made to be eternally fastened on a horse. Nothing could be more laughable than their gait when they descend to the ground. Their legs, stretched wide apart by the habit of pressing the flanks of a horse, greatly resemble the branches of a pair of tongs. When they set foot to the ground they appear to be in an element not their own. The Emperor entered Glatz escorted by two of these barbarians on horseback.

They seemed much flattered by this honor. I remarked, more than once, that the Emperor could not avoid laughing at the awkward figure of these cavaliers of the Ukraine, especially when they were giving themselves airs and graces. Their reports, which His Majesty's interpreter had some difficulty in comprehending, seemed to confirm all that had been heard of Moscow. These barbarians made the Emperor understand, by their animated gestures, convulsive movements, and warlike postures, that there would soon be a great battle between the Russians and the French. The Emperor had brandy given them; they drank it as if it had been pure water, and held out their glasses for more with laughable coolness. Their horses were small, short-bodied, and long-tailed. These animals seemed very docile. Alas! they can be seen without leaving Paris.

It is an historical fact that the King of Naples greatly awed these barbarians. Word was brought to the Emperor one day that they wished to make him their hetman. The Emperor laughed heartily at their offer, and said, in a joking way, that he was ready to support this election of a free people. It is certain that there was a touch of the theatrical in the appearance of the King of Naples which fascinated the eyes of these barbarians. He was always very richly dressed. When his horse carried him on ahead of his columns, and the wind ruffled his long hair, when he gave those great sabre thrusts

which mowed men down, then I conceive that he was singularly pleasing to these warlike tribes, who can appreciate none but external qualities. It was said that the King of Naples, by merely shaking his long sabre, had repelled an entire horde of these barbarians. I do not know just how far the thing is true, but it is at least very possible.

The Cossacks believe in sorcerers. They have this in common with all races still in their infancy. We were told a droll story about the great chief of the Cossacks, the famous Platof. Pursued by the King of Naples, he beat a retreat. A ball struck one of his officers who was at his side. The hetman, enraged against his sorcerer, had him soundly whipped in presence of all the hordes, reproaching him bitterly for not having changed the direction of the balls by his enchantments. This, surely, was to have more faith in that art than the sorcerer had himself.

September 3, from his headquarters at Glatz, the Emperor announced to his army that it must prepare for a general engagement. For some days there had been a great relaxation in the discipline of the bivouacs. He had the severity of the regulations redoubled. Several detachments which had been out foraging had prolonged their excursions rather too far. The Emperor charged his colonels to let them know that he was dissatisfied, adding that those who should not return the next day would not fight! These words require no comment.

The country surrounding Glatz was very fertile. Nearly all the fields were sown with rye ready for the sickle. Here and there, however, we could see vast openings which the Cossack horses had left there in their flight. I have since compared the aspect of these fields in November with what it was in September. What a horrible thing is war! Some days before the battle, Napoleon, accompanied by two of his marshals, made an excursion through the environs of the city. On the eve of this great event, he talked calmly about everything. He spoke of this country as he would have done of a fair and fertile province of France. To hear him, the granaries of the army were all found. These would be excellent winter quarters. The first care of the administration he would establish at Glatz would be to encourage agriculture; then he pointed out, with his finger, to his marshals the smiling curves of the river which gives its name to the city. He seemed enraptured by the prospect which lay before his eyes. Never have I seen the Emperor yield to such gentle emotions; never have I known his face so expressive of serenity, such calmness in his conversation. Never, also, have I had a stronger impression of the greatness of his soul.

September 5 the Emperor ascended the heights of Borodino, to embrace in one comprehensive glance the respective positions of the two armies. The weather was gloomy. Presently one of those fine and cold rains, usual when autumn is approaching,

began to fall. At a distance it resembled a rather dense fog. The Emperor tried to make use of his spyglass, but the sort of veil which covered the whole landscape prevented him from seeing. He grew impatient. The rain which, chased by the wind, came in slants, remained on the glasses of his lunettes; he had them wiped several times, and was much vexed by this contrariety.

The temperature was cold and damp; he asked for his cloak, wrapped himself in it, said it was impossible to stay there longer and that we must return to headquarters. He re-entered his tent, threw himself on the bed, and slept a little. On awaking, he said to me: "Constant, go and see; I think I hear a noise outside." I went out and came back to announce the arrival of General Caulaincourt. The Emperor sprang from the foot of his bed, and ran to meet the General, saying to him, with anxiety: "Do you bring me any prisoners?" The General replied that they could not make prisoners, because the Russian soldiers let themselves be killed rather than surrender. The Emperor at once exclaimed: "Let all the artillery be brought up." He had decided that, while preparing to make this a war of extermination, the cannon ought, so far as possible, to save his troops the fatigue of musket firing.

At midnight on the 6th, word was brought to the Emperor that the Russian fires seemed to be less numerous, and that the flames had been seen to die

out at different points. Some said they had heard the dull rolling of drums. The army was in the greatest uneasiness. The Emperor sprang in alarm from his bed. "That is impossible," he said, repeatedly. I wanted to give him his clothes so that he should be somewhat warmly dressed, for the night was cold. He was in such haste to assure himself whether the report were exact that he merely flung his cloak about him and went out hurriedly from his tent. The bivouac fires had, in fact, grown paler. The Emperor had alarming suspicions. Where would the war end if the Russians should fall back still further? He came back to his tent in great agitation, and returned to bed, saying repeatedly: "At any rate, we shall see to-morrow morning."

September 7 the sun rose without a cloud. The Emperor exclaimed: "It is the sun of Austerlitz." This saying of the Emperor was quoted to the army and repeated by the soldiers with enthusiasm. The roll was beaten, and the following order of the day was read:

"SOLDIERS: Behold the battle you have so desired! Henceforward the victory depends on you; it is necessary to us; it will give us abundance, good winter quarters, and a prompt return to our country. Behave as you did at Austerlitz, at Friedland, at Witespk, at Smolensk, and may your remotest posterity point with pride to your conduct on this day, and say of you: 'He was in the grand battle under the walls of Moscow!'"

The army responded by reiterated acclamations. The Emperor had dictated this proclamation several hours before the battle. It was read in the morning to the soldiers. Napoleon was on the heights of Borodino; when his ears were greeted by the enthusiastic shouts of the army, he was standing with his arms crossed and the sun shining full in his eyes, as well as the reflection of the French and Russian bayonets; he smiled, and then became serious until the affair was ended.

The portrait of the King of Rome was brought to Napoleon on that day; he needed so sweet an emotion to divert him from his great anxieties. He held the portrait for a long time on his knees, contemplating it with rapture. He said it was the most agreeable surprise that had ever been given him. He repeated several times in an undertone: "My good Louise! it is a charming attention." There was an expression of happiness on the Emperor's countenance which it is difficult to describe. The first emotions had calmed down and taken a nameless touch of melancholy. "The dear child!" That was all he said.

But he resumed all his pride as father and Emperor when, by his orders, the officers and even the soldiers of the Old Guard came to see the King of Rome. The portrait was exhibited in front of the tent. Nothing could have been more touching and yet more grave than these old soldiers, who respectfully uncovered before this picture in which they

were trying to discover some of the grand traits of Napoleon. At this moment the Emperor felt that expansive joy of a father who knows that after him his sons will have no better friends than his old companions in fatigue and glory.

At four o'clock in the morning, that is to say an hour before the affray, Napoleon had experienced a great exhaustion throughout his person; he had a slight chill, but without fever; he threw himself on his bed. At the same time, he was not so ill as M. Ségur has said. He had been suffering for some time from a bad cold which he had rather neglected, and which was augmented by the continual fatigues of this memorable day. It was accompanied by an extinction of voice, which he combated by an extremely military remedy: he drank very mild punch during the night, the whole of which he spent working in his cabinet, but without being able to speak. This inconvenience lasted for two days; he was well on the 9th, and his cough was nearly gone.

After the battle, out of six corpses one was French and five Russian. At noon, an aide-de-camp came to tell the Emperor that Comte Auguste de Caulaincourt, brother of the Duc de Vicenza, had been struck by a cannon-ball.

The Emperor heaved a profound sigh and said nothing; he knew well that he might have the heartbreak more than once before the day was over. After the battle he conveyed his condolence to the Duc de Vicenza in the most affecting manner.

Comte Auguste de Caulaincourt was a young man full of bravery. He had quitted his young wife a few hours after their marriage, to follow the French army; he came to meet a glorious death in the battle of the Moskowa. He had espoused the sister of one of the Emperor's pages, whose governor he had been for some time. This charming person was so very young that her parents desired that the marriage should not be consummated until after the return from the campaign, as had also been the case with Prince Aldobrandini at the time he married Mademoiselle de la Rochefoucauld before the Wagram campaign. General Auguste de Caulaincourt was slain in a redoubt to which he had conducted the cuirassiers of General Montbrun, who had himself just been killed by a cannon-shot in attacking the same redoubt.

The Emperor often said, in speaking of certain generals killed at the army: "Such a one is happy; he died on the field of honor; and I perhaps shall be so unfortunate as to die in my bed." He had been less philosophical when Lannes died, and I saw him weeping while at breakfast; great tears even were rolling down his cheeks and falling on his plate. He deeply regretted Desaix, Poniatowski, Bessières, but above all Lannes, and Duroc next.

During all the time that the battle of the Moskowa lasted, the Emperor had attacks of dysury. He had several times been threatened with this malady if he did not take more precautions. He suffered

much, he complained little, and when some stifled exclamation did escape him, it was because he was enduring very acute pain. Now, nothing hurts one more than to hear those complain who are not in the habit of doing so; for then one gets an idea of pain in its full intensity, since it is stronger than the strong man. At Austerlitz the Emperor had said: "Ordener is worn out; a man has but one time for war; I shall be good for six years yet, but after that I shall have to stop."

The Emperor went over the battle-field. It was a horrible spectacle; nearly all the dead were covered with wounds, which proved the bitterness with which they had fought. It was wretched weather at the time; it rained, and the wind was very high. The poor wounded men who had not yet been carried to the ambulances, half rose from the ground so that they might be noticed and given assistance. There were some who cried: *Long live the Emperor!* in spite of their sufferings and their exhaustion. All of our soldiers who had been struck by Russian balls had wounds as large as large holes on their bodies, for the Russian bullets were much larger than ours. We saw a standard bearer who was wrapped in his flag as if it were a shroud. He seemed to give signs of life, but he died from the shock he experienced when he was lifted. The Emperor went on and said nothing. Several times, when passing in front of the most mutilated, he put his hand over his eyes so as not to see them This

calmness did not last long. There was a place on the field of battle where French and Russians had fallen pell-mell; almost all of them were merely wounded, more or less grievously. When the Emperor heard their cries, I saw him fly into a temper, shout after those whose business it was to take up the wounded, and become irritated at the slowness with which they performed their duty. It was hard work to keep the horses from treading on some of the dead bodies, there were so many of them about. One wounded man was struck by the shoe of one of the horses of the Emperor's suite; the poor wretch uttered a heartrending cry; the Emperor turned round quickly, demanding angrily what blunderer had hurt that man. Some one replied, thinking to appease him, that the man was only a Russian. "Russian or French," he replied, "I want all to be taken up."

Some poor young fellows who had come to make their first campaign in Russia, being mortally wounded, lost courage and cried like children, calling meanwhile on their mothers. This horrible picture will remain eternally graven in my memory.

The Emperor urgently repeated his orders for the removal of the wounded, turned rein in silence, and came back in the evening to headquarters. I spent the night close by him. His sleep was very much disturbed, or rather he did not sleep at all. Several times he repeated, while turning restlessly on his pillow: "Poor Caulaincourt! What a day! what a day!"

CHAPTER XXIII

Itinerary of France in Russia — Magnificence of the court of Dresden — Conversation of the Emperor with Berthier — The war made on England only — A general rumor concerning the re-establishment of Poland — Familiar questions of the Emperor — Passage of the Niémen — Arrival and sojourn at Wilna — Enthusiasm of the Poles — Singular coincidence of dates — The Polish deputation — The Emperor's reply to the deputies — Engagements made with Austria — Disappointed hopes — M. de Balachoff at Wilna — Expectation of peace — First advances of the Emperor on the territory of Old Russia — Continual retreat of the Russians — Frightful storm — Immense desire for a battle — Forsaking the camp of Drissa — Departure of Napoleon and of Constantine — Privations of the army, and first discouragements — Peace in prospect after a battle — Affected disdain of the Emperor for his enemies — Government established at Wilna — New retreats of the Russian army — The Emperor's words to the King of Naples — Plan announced and not effected — The three years' campaign, and prompt march forward — Fatigue occasioned the Emperor by the excessive heat — Audience in undress — Uncertainty insupportable to the Emperor — Useless opposition of the Duc de Vicenza, Comte de Lobau, and the Grand Marshal — Departure from Witepsk and arrival at Smolensk — Remarkable buildings — The banks of the Moskowa.

AS I have before announced, I shall endeavor to combine in this chapter a number of souvenirs relating to matters personal to the Emperor in the different sojourns we made between the frontier of France and the frontiers of the Russian Empire.

There will result, alas! a very great contrast in the comparison that will be made between our route in going to Moscow and our route in coming back. One should have seen Napoleon at Dresden, surrounded by a court of princes and kings, in order to get an idea of the highest point which human grandeurs can attain. There, still more than elsewhere, the Emperor showed himself affable to all; everything smiled upon him, and not one of those who enjoyed as we did the spectacle of his glory, could even have conceived the thought of beholding fortune for the first time unfaithful to him; and what an infidelity!

Among other particularities of our stay at Dresden, I recall a remark that I one day heard the Emperor make to Marshal Berthier, whom he had summoned at a very early hour. When the Marshal arrived the Emperor was not yet out of bed. I was ordered to admit him at once, so that while dressing the Emperor I heard a conversation between Napoleon and his major-general, of which I should be glad to remember all the details; but I am at least sure of reporting faithfully one thought which struck me. The Emperor said in so many words: "I have no grudge against Alexander; I am not making war on Russia, no more on her than on Spain; I have only one enemy, and that is England; it is she I wish to strike through Russia; I will pursue her everywhere." Meanwhile the Marshal was biting his nails, according to his constant habit. On that day there was a magnificent review, at which were

present all the princes of the confederation, who surrounded their chief like the great vassals of his crown.

When the different army corps, drawn up in echelons from the other side of the Elbe, had advanced upon the confines of Poland, we quitted Dresden, to find the same pronounced enthusiasm at every place where the Emperor arrived. Consequently we were very much petted in all the residences where we stopped, for the people sought to entertain His Majesty even in the persons of those who had the honor to serve him.

At this epoch it was generally rumored throughout the army and among all the members of the Emperor's household, that it was his intention to re-establish the kingdom of Poland. Stranger as I was and should have been to all which related to affairs, I was not more deaf than other people to the expression of an opinion which was common to everybody and of which all were talking. Occasionally the Emperor did not disdain to make me give him an account of what I had heard, and then he smiled, for one would have had to be unfaithful to truth to report to him anything he might find disagreeable; he was at that time (the expression is not too strong) the object of the blessings of the Polish people.

June 24, we were on the banks of the Niémen, that stream made so famous already by the interview of the two Emperors in circumstances very different from those in which they now stood in relation to

each other. The passage of the army began in the evening and lasted nearly forty-eight hours, during which the Emperor was almost constantly on horseback, so well did he know that his presence accelerated the operations. Afterwards we continued our route towards Wilna, capital of the grand duchy of Lithuania. We arrived in front of this city occupied by the Russians on the 27th, and one might say that it was there, there only, that the military operations commenced, for up to this point the Emperor had journeyed as he might have done in the interior departments of France. The Russians attacked were beaten and retreated, so that two days later we were in Wilna, a rather considerable city, which appeared to me to contain nearly thirty thousand inhabitants. I was struck by the incredible number of convents and churches erected there. At Wilna the Emperor was extremely pleased with the proceedings of five or six hundred students who came and asked to be enrolled in the army; I scarcely need say that solicitations of this description seldom failed of a good reception from His Majesty.

We remained quite a long time at Wilna; from there the Emperor followed the movement of his armies, and also occupied himself with the organization of the grand duchy of Lithuania, of which this city is known to be the capital. As the Emperor was very often on horseback, I had plenty of leisure to become acquainted with the city and its environs. The Lithuanians were in a state of enthusiasm

THE FRENCH ARMY CROSSING THE NIEMEN

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impossible to describe, and though I have seen a great many fêtes in my lifetime, I shall never forget the ardor of an entire population when the great national fête of the regeneration of Poland was celebrated, whether by an oddity of fate or a calculation of the Emperor, precisely on the 14th of July. The Poles were still uncertain concerning the definitive fate reserved by the Emperor for their country, but a future filled with hope was gleaming before their eyes.

It was not the same when the Emperor had received the deputation from the Polish confederation established at Warsaw. This numerous deputation, with a count palatine at its head, asked for the integral re-establishment of the former kingdom of Poland. Here is the Emperor's response:

"Gentlemen deputies of the confederation of Poland: I have listened with interest to what you have just been saying to me.

"A Pole, I would think and act as you do; I would have voted like you in the Assembly of Warsaw; love of country is the prime virtue of civilized man.

"In my position, I have many interests to conciliate and many duties to fulfil. Had I been reigning at the time of the first, the second, and the third partition of Poland, I would have armed my entire people to support you. As soon as victory permitted me to restore your ancient laws to your capital and a portion of your provinces, I did so with alacrity,

yet without prolonging a war which would have cost the lives of my subjects.

"I love your nation. For sixteen years I have seen your soldiers beside me, on the fields of Italy and those of Spain.

"I applaud all that you have done; I authorize the efforts you desire to make; all that depends on me to second your resolutions I will perform.

"If your efforts are unanimous, you may conceive the hope of reducing your enemies to a recognition of your rights. But in these countries, so far apart and so extensive, it is, above all, the unanimity of the efforts of the population that covers them on which you must base your expectations of success.

"I spoke to you in the same way when I made my first appearance in Poland; I must add here that I have guaranteed to the Emperor Alexander the integrity of his States, and that I cannot authorize any manœuvre or any movement which would tend to disturb him in the peaceable possession of what remains to him of the Polish provinces. Let Lithuania, Samogitie, Witepsk, Polotsk, Mohilow, Wolhynie, the Ukraine, Podolia, be animated by the same spirit that I have seen in Greater Poland, and Providence will crown with success the sanctity of your cause; it will recompense that devotion to your country which has rendered you so interesting and acquired for you so many titles to my esteem and protection, on which you must rely under all circumstances."

I have thought it my duty to report here the entire response of the Emperor to the deputies of the Polish confederation, having been a witness of the effect it produced at Wilna. Several Poles, with whom I had become acquainted, spoke to me concerning it with sorrow; but their consternation was not contagious, and the air rang none the less with shouts of *Long live the Emperor!* whenever His Majesty showed himself in public, which was nearly every day.

While we were staying at Wilna, some hopes were entertained of seeing a new peace concluded, an envoy from the Emperor Alexander having come to the Emperor Napoleon; but these hopes were of short duration, and I have since known that the Russian officer, M. Balachoff, dreading, like nearly all his countrymen, a reconciliation between the two Emperors, had delivered his message in such a way as to irritate the pride of His Majesty, who sent him back after having received him badly. Everything looked propitious for the Emperor; he was then at the head of the most numerous and most formidable army he had yet commanded. M. Balachoff departed, therefore, and everything was arranged for the carrying out of the Emperor's plans. His Majesty, at the moment of entering the Russian territory, had no longer his customary serenity, or, at least, I had occasion to remark that he was more silent than usual at the hours when I had the honor to approach him. However, as soon as he had come

to a decision, as soon as he had sent his troops across the Vilia, the river on which Wilna is situated, the Emperor took possession of the Russian territory with an enthusiastic ardor which might be described as that of a young man. One of the whippers-in who accompanied me related that the Emperor pushed his horse on ahead without an escort, and made it run at full speed for nearly a league in the woods that stretch all along the right bank of the Vilia, in spite of the mass of Cossacks he knew to be scattered through them.

I have more than once seen the Emperor grow impatient because he found no enemies to fight; in point of fact, the Russians had abandoned Wilna, which we had entered without resistance; and again on leaving that city, the scouts reported the absence of opposing troops, with the exception of the Cossacks of whom I just now spoke. I remember that we thought we heard the distant roar of cannon one day, and that the Emperor almost trembled with joy; but we soon discovered what it meant: the noise was that of thunder, and all of a sudden the most frightful storm I have ever beheld in my life broke over the entire army. The ground, for a space of more than forty leagues, was so covered with water, that the roads could not be made out, and this storm, as deadly as a combat might have been, cost us an immense number of men, several thousand horses, and a part of the immense stores of the expedition.

It was known to the entire army that the Russians had long been making immense works at Drissa, where they had constructed an enormous intrenched camp. The number of troops assembled there, the considerable sums expended on the works, all gave occasion to suppose that at last the Russian army would await the French troops at this point; all the more so because the Emperor Alexander, in the numerous proclamations scattered throughout his army, some of which had come into our hands, had boasted of conquering the French at Drissa, where (so said the proclamations) we were to find our graves. It was otherwise ordained by destiny: the Russians, again falling back towards the heart of Russia, abandoned this famous camp of Drissa as the Emperor approached. At this period I heard several general officers say that a great battle would then have been a salutary event for the French army, which was beginning to feel discouraged, at first for lack of foes to combat, and afterwards because the privations of every sort were daily growing more difficult to endure. Entire divisions only lived, so to say, by marauding; the soldiers devastated the infrequent habitations and châteaux scattered over the country, and, in spite of the severity of the Emperor's orders against marauders and pillagers, these orders could not be executed; the officers themselves, for the most part, having nothing to live on but the booty collected by the soldiers and afterwards divided with them.

In the presence of his generals, the Emperor affected a serenity which he did not always feel. From some half-uttered words I heard him utter in these grave circumstances, I am authorized to believe that the Emperor desired a battle so ardently only because he hoped to see the Emperor Alexander make new overtures to treat with him for peace. I think that then, after a first victory, he would have accepted it; but he could never have induced himself to retrace his steps, after such immense preparations, without having given one of those great battles which suffice for the glory of a campaign; that, at least, is what I heard continually repeated. The Emperor also talked very often of his enemies with an affected scorn which he did not really feel; his aim in this was to raise the moral tone of his officers and soldiers, many of whom did not conceal their discouragement.

Before leaving Wilna, the Emperor had established there a sort of central government, at the head of which he had placed the Duc de Bassano, so as to have an intermediate point between France and the line of operations he was going to attempt in the interior of Russia. Disappointed, as I have said, by the abandonment of the camp of Drissa by the Russian army, we marched rapidly toward Witepsk, where the larger part of the French forces were assembled at the end of July. There the impatience of the Emperor was once more deceived by another retreat of the Russians; for the combats of

Astrovno and Mohilow, though important, cannot be ranked among the number of those battles which the Emperor so ardently desired. On entering Witepsk, the Emperor learned that the Emperor Alexander and the Grand Duke Constantine had left the army to repair to St. Petersburg.

At this epoch, that is to say, at the moment of our arrival in Witepsk, it was rumored that the Emperor would content himself with taking up his position there, fortifying himself, organizing the means of subsistence for his army, and then defer until the following year the execution of his vast designs on Russia. I do not know what he really thought on this matter; but what I can certify is, that being in the room adjoining the one where he was, I heard him say one day to the King of Naples that the first Russian campaign was ended, that next year he would be at Moscow, the year after that at St. Petersburg, and that the Russian war would last three years. Would to God that His Majesty had carried out the plan he was tracing with extreme vivacity to the King of Naples! Not so many brave fellows would have succumbed, perhaps, a few months later, in the frightful retreat whose disasters I shall hereafter have occasion to recall.

The weather was excessively warm during our stay at Witepsk, and the Emperor was extremely fatigued in consequence. I often heard him complain of it, and I never saw him, under any other circumstances, endure the weight of his clothing

with so much impatience; in his own quarters he seldom wore a coat, and frequently threw himself down to rest. Others beside myself can bear witness to this fact; for he frequently received his general officers in this way, although he usually never showed himself except in the uniform he habitually wore. However, the sort of influence which the heat exercised over the physique of the Emperor had not enervated his great soul; and his ever-active genius embraced all branches of the administration. But it was easy for those best acquainted with his disposition to see that it was chiefly uncertainty which made him suffer at Witepsk: should he remain in Poland, or should he advance, without delay, into the heart of Russia? While he was wavering between these two ideas, I often saw him sad and taciturn. In this perplexity between repose and movement, the Emperor's choice could not be doubtful. Hence, after a general council, in which I heard it said that His Majesty had encountered much opposition, I learned that we were to march on toward Moscow, from which we were said to be only twenty days' distance. Among those who most vigorously opposed the Emperor's immediate march upon Moscow, I heard the names of the Duc de Vicenza and the Comte de Lobau mentioned; but what I can affirm, because I personally knew it in an undoubted manner, is, that the grand marshal of the palace had several times sought to dissuade the Emperor from his project;

but all these attempts were shattered against his will.

We turned, therefore, toward the second capital of Russia, and after several days' marching arrived at Smolensk, a large and beautiful city. The Russians, whom the Emperor had at last thought he could hold, had just evacuated it, after having lost a great many men and burned the larger part of the magazines. We entered it in the midst of flames; but this was nothing to what was awaiting us at Moscow. At Smolensk I remarked two edifices which seemed to me of the greatest beauty: the cathedral and the episcopal palace, which almost made a city by themselves, so considerable in their extent were the buildings, which were, moreover, separated from the city.

I will not set down here the names, barbarous for the most part, of the places we passed through after leaving Smolensk. All that I can add concerning our itinerary during the first half of this gigantic campaign, is that we reached the banks of the Moskowa September 5, and that there the Emperor saw with lively satisfaction that the Russians were at last determined to give him the great battle which was the object of all his desires, and which he had been pursuing for more than two hundred leagues like a prey which could not escape him.

CHAPTER XXIV

The morrow of the battle of the Moskowa — Aspect of the field of battle — *Moscow! Moscow!* — False alarm — Saxons returning from a marauding expedition — The sentinel on the cry to arms — *Let them come; we shall see them!* — The glass of chambertin — The Duc de Dantzic — Entry into Moscow — Silent march of the army — The Muscovite beggars — Reflection — The lights in the windows extinguished — The Emperor's lodging at the entry of a faubourg — The vermin — The vinegar and aloe wood — Two o'clock in the morning — Fire breaks out in the city — The Emperor's anger — He threatens Marshal Mortier and the young guard — The Kremlin — Apartment occupied by His Majesty — The cross of Ivan the Great — Description of the Kremlin — The Emperor cannot sleep there even a few hours — Fire in the neighborhood of the Kremlin — The conflagration — The sparks — The park of artillery under the Emperor's windows — The Russians spreading the fire — Immobility of the Emperor — He leaves the Kremlin — Men offer to shelter the Emperor with cloaks and carry him through the fire in their arms; he refuses — The Emperor and Prince d'Eckmühl — Vessels loaded with grain are burned on the Moskowa — Shells placed in the stoves of houses — Female incendiaries — The gibbets — The Kremlin preserved — Return to the Kremlin — Painful saying of the Emperor — The crows of Moscow — Concerts at the Kremlin.

THE next day after the battle of Moskowa, I was with the Emperor in his tent, placed on the battle-field itself. The greatest quiet reigned around us. It was fine to see this whole army closing up its columns, in which the Russian cannon had just

made such yawning voids, and proceeding to the repose of the bivouac with that security which victors always possess. The Emperor seemed overcome with lassitude: from time to time he would clasp his hands strongly above his crossed knees, and I frequently heard him repeating with a sort of convulsive movement: "Moscow! Moscow!" Several times he told me to go and see what was passing outside; then he would rise and come behind me and look over my shoulder. The noise made by the sentinel as he presented arms to him never failed to notify me of his approach. After about a quarter of an hour of these silent comings and goings, the advance sentinels cried, *To arms!* It is impossible to describe the promptitude with which the hollow square was formed around the tent. The Emperor rushed out; but he went back again for his hat and sword. It was a false alarm. A regiment of Saxons who were returning from a marauding expedition had been mistaken for the enemy.

There was a good deal of laughing at the blunder, especially when the marauders were seen coming back, some with quarters of meat stuck on top of bayonets, others with half-plucked fowls or hams to make your mouth water. I was outside of the tent, and I shall never forget the first movement of the sentinel when the alarm was given. He lowered the pan of his musket, to see if the priming was all right, shook the hammer by striking it with

his wrist, and then shouldered his weapon again, saying coolly: "Well! let them come; *we shall see them.*" I told this story to the Emperor, who was much amused, and repeated it to Prince Berthier. The Emperor made this brave soldier drink a glass of his Chambertin wine.

The Duc de Dantzic was the first to enter Moscow. The Emperor did not come till afterwards. He made his entry during the night. Never was night more gloomy; there was something truly frightful in that silent march of the army, suspended from time to time by messages which came from within the city, and which appeared to be of the most sinister description. No Muscovite figures could be distinguished but those of some mendicants covered with rags, who watched the army defiling past in stupid astonishment. Some of them seemed to be asking alms. Our soldiers flung them bread and some pieces of money. I could not avoid a somewhat painful reflection on these wretches, the only beings whose condition is not varied by great political upheavals, the only ones without affections, without national sympathies.

As we advanced into the streets of the faubourgs, we looked at the windows of the houses on either side, and were astonished not to perceive a single human face. One or two lights appeared in the panes of some houses; they were quickly extinguished; and these traces of life, so suddenly effaced, produced in us a feeling of dismay. The Emperor

halted at the entrance of the faubourg Dorogomilow, and was lodged, not in an inn, as some persons have said, but in a house so dirty and miserable that the next morning we found in his bed and clothing a sort of vermin very common in Russia. We had them also, to our great disgust. The Emperor could not sleep during the night he spent there. As usual, I lay in his chamber, and, notwithstanding the precaution I had taken of burning vinegar and aloe wood, the odor was so disagreeable that His Majesty was calling to me every minute: "Are you asleep, Constant?" "No, Sire." — "My son, burn some vinegar; I cannot endure this frightful odor; it is torturing; I cannot sleep." I would do my best; a moment afterwards, when the fumes of the vinegar had evaporated, it was necessary to burn sugar or aloe wood again.

It was two o'clock in the morning when word was brought to the Emperor that fire had broken out in the city. It came from some French people established in the country, and an officer of the Russian police, who confirmed this news and entered into details too precise to permit the Emperor to doubt the truth of it. Still he persisted in not believing it. "That is impossible. Do you believe that, Constant? Go and find out whether it is true." And, thereupon, he threw himself down on his bed again, seeking to rest a little; then he would call me back to repeat the same questions.

The Emperor passed the night in extreme agita-

tion. When day arrived, he knew all; he sent for Marshal Mortier and threatened both him and the young guard. Mortier, for all response, showed him some houses covered with iron whose roofing was still perfectly intact. But the Emperor made him notice the black smoke that was issuing from them, clenched his hands, and kicked the wretched floor in his bedroom.

By six o'clock in the morning we were at the Kremlin. Napoleon occupied the apartment of the czars. It opened on a rather vast esplanade from which one descended by a great stone stairway. On the same esplanade might be seen the church containing the tombs of the former sovereigns, the Senate House, the barracks, the arsenal, and a fine bell-tower, whose cross dominates the city. It is the gilded cross of Ivan the Great. The Emperor gave a glance of satisfaction at the beautiful view spread out before him; for not a sign of conflagration was yet manifest in any part of the buildings which surround the Kremlin. This palace is of both Gothic and modern architecture, and the blending of styles gives it a most singular aspect. It is in this vast edifice that the old dynasties of the Romanoffs and Ruriks lived and died. It is the same palace which was so often blood-stained by the intrigues of a ferocious court at that epoch when the poniard usually settled all domestic quarrels. His Majesty was not to find there even a few hours of tranquil slumber.

In effect, the Emperor, somewhat reassured by the reports of Marshal Mortier, had written to the Emperor Alexander some message of peace. The letter was to be carried by a Russian with a flag of truce, when the Emperor, who was walking back and forth in his apartment, saw from his windows an immense glow at some distance from the palace. It was the fire, which had broken out again with greater force than ever, and the north wind was driving the flames in the direction of the Kremlin. It was midnight. The alarm was given by two officers who occupied that wing of the building which was nearest the centre of the conflagration. Some wooden houses painted in different colors, devoured in a few moments, had already fallen in; some warehouses of oil, brandy, and other combustible materials, darted forth flames of a livid blue, which communicated themselves to other buildings in the vicinity with lightning-like rapidity. Sparks, a rain of enormous embers, fell on the roofs of the Kremlin. We trembled at the thought that a single one of them, happening to fall on an ammunition wagon, might produce an explosion which would blow up the Kremlin; for, by some inconceivable negligence, a whole park of artillery had been established underneath the Emperor's windows.

Very soon the most incredible reports reached the Emperor. Russians themselves had been seen feeding the flames and throwing inflammable materials into those parts of the houses which were still

untouched. Those Russians who did not mingle with the incendiaries crossed their arms and contemplated the disaster with an impassibility of which no idea can be formed. They neither clapped their hands nor shouted with delight, but otherwise they were like men witnessing a brilliant display of fireworks. The Emperor did not hesitate to believe that the whole thing had been planned by the enemy.

His Majesty came down from his apartment by the great stairway of the north, made famous by the massacre of the strelitz. The fire had already made such enormous headway on this side that the external doors were half consumed. The horses would not pass them; they reared, and it was with great difficulty that they could be made to cross the thresholds. The Emperor's gray greatcoat was burned in several places, and so was his hair. A minute later we were marching on hot firebrands.

And yet we were not out of danger even then. We had to get out of the inflamed building rubbish which blocked our passage. Several sorties were attempted, but without success; the hot breath of the flame blew into our faces and drove us back in horrible confusion. At last a postern was discovered which opened on the Moskowa; through this the Emperor, his officers, and his guard succeeded in escaping from the Kremlin. But it was only to fall back again into narrow streets, where the fire, shut up as in a furnace, redoubled its intensity; where the nearness of the roofs brought the flames

together above our heads in heated domes which shut out from us the sight of heaven. It was time to leave this dangerous passage; one sole exit presented itself; this was a little, crooked street, encumbered with rubbish of every sort, pieces of iron detached from the roofs, and burning timbers. There was a moment of hesitation amongst us. Some offered to cover the Emperor from head to foot with their cloaks and carry him on their arms through this terrible passage. The Emperor refused, and settled the question by plunging, on foot, into the middle of the blazing rubbish. Two or three vigorous strides put him in a place of safety.

Then took place that touching scene between the Emperor and Prince d'Eckmühl, who, wounded at the Moskowa, had had himself brought back into the flames to save the Emperor or die with him. As soon as the Marshal caught a glimpse of him, issuing calmly from so great a peril, this good and tender soul made an immense effort and ran to throw himself into his arms. His Majesty pressed him to his heart as if to thank him for having given him an emotion so sweet in one of those moments when danger usually makes men selfish and insensitive.

But, at last, even the air, crossed by all these flames, grew so hot as to be unbreathable. The atmosphere became burning; the window-panes of the palace broke; we could no longer remain in the apartments. The Emperor was as if stricken with immobility. His face was red and bathed

in burning sweat. The King of Naples, Prince Eugène, and Prince de Neufchâtel entreated him to leave the palace; but the only answer he made was by gestures of impatience. At this instant shouts proceeding from the most northerly wing of the palace announced that a part of the walls had just fallen in, and that the fire was gaining ground with inconceivable rapidity. The position being no longer tenable, the Emperor said it was time to depart, and he went to inhabit the imperial palace of Pétrowski.

On arriving at Pétrowski, the Emperor commissioned M. de Narbonne to go and examine a palace which, I think, was that of Catherine. It was a fine edifice, and the apartments were completely furnished. M. de Narbonne came to acquaint the Emperor with this fact; but hardly was it known that he meant to make it his habitation when fire broke out in every part of it; in a short time it was consumed.

Such was the ravenous fury of these wretched hirelings to burn everything, that the boats, of which there were very many on the Moskowa, laden with grain, hay, and other agricultural products, were consumed and sank in the water with a frightful crackling. Soldiers of the Russian police had been seen brisking up the fire with lances smeared with tar. In the stoves of several houses shells had been placed, which exploded and killed a number of our soldiers. In the streets, filthy and hideous

women and drunken men ran to the burning houses, and seized flaming brands, which they meant to carry elsewhere; and our soldiers were many a time obliged to beat their hands down with sabre-thrusts to make them loose their hold. The Emperor had such incendiaries as were taken in the act hanged on posts in one of the city squares. The populace prostrated themselves at the base of these gibbets and kissed the feet of those executed, praying, meanwhile, and blessing themselves with the sign of the cross. There are few examples of such fanaticism.

Here is a fact of which I was a witness, and which proves that the inferior executors of this vast conspiracy were evidently acting in accordance with superior instructions. A man, covered with a torn and dirty sheepskin, and wearing a wretched cap, went boldly up the steps that conducted to the Kremlin. But these filthy vestments did not conceal a distinguished bearing; and, at a moment when the surveillance was most rigid, the audacious beggar appeared suspicious. He was arrested and taken to the guard-house, where he was questioned by the officer of the post. As he offered some resistance, probably considering the proceeding a trifle arbitrary, the sentinel put his hand on the man's breast to force him to enter. This rather abrupt movement pushed aside the sheepskin that covered him, and decorations were visible. His wretched vestments were at once pulled off, and he was recognized as a Rus-

sian officer. He had kindling matches on his person, which he was distributing to the rabble. Subjected to an interrogatory, he avowed that he had a special mission to accelerate the burning of the Kremlin. Several questions were asked, tending to wrest new avowals from him. He replied with perfect calmness. He was put in prison. I think he was punished as an incendiary, but I am not certain. Whenever one of these wretches was brought into the Emperor's presence, he would shrug his shoulders and, with a gesture of contempt and anger, order him to be taken out of his sight. The grenadiers sometimes did justice on them with their bayonets. It is not difficult to understand such an exasperation on the part of soldiers driven in this cowardly and odious manner from a resting-place won by the sword.

Pétrowski was a handsome house belonging to one of Alexander's chamberlains. A man was found hidden in the chamber His Majesty was to occupy, but as he had no weapons, he was released, on the supposition that fear alone had led him to this habitation. The Emperor arrived during the night at his new residence. He waited there in mortal anxiety for the fire to be extinguished at the Kremlin, so that he might go back thither. The villa of a chamberlain was not his place. In fact, thanks to the active and courageous measures taken by a battalion of the guard, the Kremlin was preserved from the flames, and the Emperor gave the signal for departure.

To re-enter Moscow it was necessary to traverse the camp, or rather the different camps of the army. We marched over a cold and muddy ground, amidst fields where everything had been ruined. The aspect of the camp was most singular, and I experienced a feeling of bitter sadness on beholding our soldiers constrained to bivouac at the gates of a vast and beautiful city of which they were the masters, but the fire still more than they. In appointing Marshal Mortier governor of Moscow, the Emperor had said to him: "Above all, no pillage; you will answer to me for that with your head." The order had been rigidly obeyed, up to the hour of the conflagration; but when it was plain that the fire was going to devour everything, and that it was useless to abandon to flames things of which the soldiers could make use, then liberty was given them to draw largely from this vast storehouse of all the luxury of the North.

Hence nothing could be at once more droll or more melancholy than to see the costliest furniture lying about in the wretched board hovels which were the only tents of our soldiers; silken sofas, the richest of Siberian furs, cashmere shawls, and silver dishes; and what messes in those princely vessels! a wretchedly bad black broth and morsels of still bleeding horseflesh. Good munition bread was then worth three times as much as all these riches. Later, there was no horseflesh to be had.

On re-entering Moscow, the wind brought us the

insupportable odor of burning houses; hot cinders flew into our mouths and eyes, and very often we had barely time to get out of the way of great pillars ruined by fire, which crumbled with a noise henceforth without an echo on this calcined soil. Moscow was not so deserted as we had believed. As fear is the first impression produced by conquest, all the remaining inhabitants had concealed themselves in cellars or in the immense vaults which underlie the Kremlin. The conflagration chased them like wolves from these lairs, and when we returned to the city, nearly twenty thousand inhabitants were wandering among the ruins, with stupor depicted on faces blackened by smoke and drawn by hunger; for they had not expected, having lain down at night under the roofs of men, to rise in the morning in an open field. We saw some of them whom need was urging to the last extremities; vegetables that remained in the gardens they were devouring raw; and several poor wretches were noticed throwing themselves repeatedly into the Moskowa, to fish out of it the grain which Rostopchine had had flung in. Numbers perished in the water after unsuccessful efforts. Such was the scene of misery the Emperor was obliged to pass through in order to reach the Kremlin.

The apartment which he occupied was very large and well lighted, but almost unfurnished. He had his iron bedstead, as in all the châteaux where he slept while in campaign. His windows looked on

the Moskowa. One could get a good view of the fire which was still burning in various quarters of the city, and which was extinguished at one point only to reappear in another. His Majesty said to me one evening, in profound affliction: "Those wretches will not leave one stone upon another." I do not think there can be in any other region so many crows as there were at Moscow. The Emperor was really put out of patience by their presence, and he said to me: "But, my God, will they follow us everywhere?"

There were some concerts in the Emperor's apartments during his stay in Moscow. Napoleon was very gloomy. Parlor music no longer made any impression on this disordered soul. He knew but one which always moved him, that of camps before and after battles.

The day after the Emperor's arrival, MM. Ed—— and V—— came to the Kremlin with the intention of seeing His Majesty. After waiting for him in vain and not seeing him, they were exchanging regrets for having failed in their attempt, when they suddenly heard a blind open above their heads. They raised their eyes and recognized the Emperor, who said to them: "Gentlemen, who are you?" "Sire, we are Frenchmen." He invited them to come up to his apartment, and continued his questions: "What is the nature of the occupations which have settled you in Moscow?" "We are tutors in the houses of Russian nobles, who have been driven

away by the arrival of Your Majesty's forces. We could not resist their entreaties that we should not abandon their estates, and we are now alone in their palaces." The Emperor inquired if there were other Frenchmen in Moscow, and begged them to fetch them to him. He then proposed that they should charge themselves with the maintenance of order, and appointed as their chief M. M——, whom he decorated with a tricolored scarf, and enjoined them to prevent the French soldiers from pillaging churches, to shoot down malefactors, and to be rigorous against the galley slaves, who had been set at liberty by Rostopchine on condition that they should set fire to the city.

A part of these Frenchmen followed our army in its retreat, foreseeing that a longer stay in Moscow would expose them to annoyances. Those who did not imitate their example were condemned to sweep the streets.

The Emperor Alexander, informed of Rostopchine's conduct toward them, rebuked the governor roundly, and ordered him to restore their liberty at once to these unfortunate Frenchmen.

CHAPTER XXV

The Muscovites ask for alms — The Emperor has them given provisions and money — The days in the Kremlin — The Emperor occupies himself with municipal organization — A theatre erected near the Kremlin — The Italian singer — The retreat is spoken of — His Majesty prolongs his meals more than usual — Regulation concerning the Comédie Française — Engagement between Murat and Kutusoff — The churches of the Kremlin despoiled of their ornaments — The reviews — The Kremlin blown up — The Emperor resumes the road to Smolensk — The clouds of crows — The wounded of Oupinakoë — Every carriage of the suite takes one — Injustice of accusing the Emperor of cruelty — Explosion of ammunition wagons — Headquarters — The Cossacks — The Emperor hears of the Mallet conspiracy — General Savary — Arrival at Smolensk — The Emperor and the commissary of provisions of the grand army — The Emperor extricates Prince d'Eckmühl — *Guard the safety of the Empire!* — Indefatigable activity of the Emperor — The stragglers — The corps of Marshal Davoust — His violence when he finds himself ready to die of hunger — Marshal Ney is found — Napoleon's words — Prince Eugène weeps for joy — Marshal Lefebvre.

WE returned to the Kremlin in the morning of September 18. The palace and the foundling asylum were almost the only buildings which remained intact. Our carriages were beset all along the route by a crowd of wretched Muscovites who came to beg for alms. They followed us as far as the palace, walking in the hot cinders or on the calcined and still scorching stones. The most mis-

erable were barefooted. It was a heartrending spectacle to see some of these unfortunates, whose feet were treading on heated objects, expressing their pain by cries or gestures of frightful despair. As all the uninjured portion of the streets was occupied by the train of our carriages, the crowd flung themselves pell-mell among the wheels and between the legs of the horses. Our march was thus delayed, and we had for a long time before our eyes this tableau of the greatest of miseries, that of people who are burned out and without bread or resources. The Emperor had food and money given to them.

When we were once more established in the Kremlin, and had resumed our habits as domiciliated people, we passed several days in tolerable tranquillity. The Emperor seemed less gloomy, and all who surrounded him felt the effects of it. One might almost have thought we were coming back from the country to take up anew the ways of city life. If from time to time the Emperor had this illusion, it was very quickly dispelled by the spectacle afforded by Moscow as seen from the windows of the apartments. It was plain that he made some very painful reflections every time he turned his eyes in that direction, although he no longer gave way to those movements of impatience which so frequently attacked him, at the time of his first sojourn at the palace, when he saw the flames coming to chase him from his apartments. But his was the unhealthy calm of an anxious man who does not

know how things will turn. The days were long at the Kremlin. The Emperor was awaiting Alexander's answer, an answer that did not come. At this period I noticed that the Emperor usually had on his night table Voltaire's history of Charles XII.

Meanwhile the Emperor was tormented by his administrative genius even amidst the ruins of the great city. To divert himself from the anxieties caused by outside affairs, he busied himself with municipal organization. It was already decided that Moscow should be provisioned for the winter. A theatre was erected near the Kremlin; but the Emperor never went there. The troupe was composed of several wretched French actors remaining in Moscow in a state of frightful destitution. Nevertheless His Majesty encouraged this enterprise in the hope that the theatrical representations might afford a salutary relaxation to the officers and soldiers; besides few but military men were there. It has been said that the principal actors of Paris were sent for. I know nothing positive about this. There was a celebrated Italian singer at Moscow whom the Emperor heard several times, but only in his own apartments. He did not belong to the troupe.

Up to October 18, the time was spent in more or less lively discussions between the Emperor and his generals concerning the final measures to be taken. They all knew that a retreat must be decided on, and the Emperor did not disguise it from himself; but it was plain how much it cost his pride to say

the last word. The days that immediately preceded the 18th were the saddest I have ever seen. A great coldness was evident in His Majesty's most ordinary relations with his friends and counsellors. He became taciturn. Entire hours elapsed without a single one of those present taking the initiative of conversation. The Emperor, who usually expedited his meals, now prolonged them in an astonishing manner. Sometimes during the day he would throw himself on a sofa with a novel in his hand, which he might or might not read, and seemed absorbed in profound reveries. Verses were sent him from Paris, which he read aloud, expressing his opinion of them in a brief and trenchant manner. I saw him devote two or three evenings to drawing up rules for the Comédie Française of Paris. It is difficult to comprehend this attention to such administrative trifles when the future was so burdened. It was generally believed, and probably not without reason, that the Emperor was acting with a political end in view, and that these regulations concerning the Comédie Française, at a time when no bulletin had yet given a complete notion of the disastrous position of the army, were intended to impose on the Parisians, who would not fail to say: "Things cannot be going so very badly if the Emperor has time to occupy himself with theatres."

The news of the 18th put an end to all uncertainties. The Emperor was reviewing Ney's divisions in the principal court of the Kremlin,

distributing crosses to the bravest soldiers and addressing encouraging words to all, when an aide-de-camp, young Béranger, came to announce that a very brisk engagement had taken place at Winkowo between Murat and Kutusoff, and that Murat's advance-guard had been destroyed and our positions carried by force. The resumption of hostilities on the part of the Russians was manifest. When the tidings first came, the Emperor's astonishment was extreme. There was on the contrary among the soldiers a sort of electric shock of enthusiasm and anger which reached His Majesty. Transported to see what bitterness and desire of vengeance were imparted to these ardent souls by the shame of a defeat, even though received without dishonor, the Emperor pressed the hand of the colonel who stood nearest, went on with the review, ordered the rallying of the troops the same evening; and before night the whole army was in movement toward Woronowo.

Some days before we quitted Moscow, the Emperor had despoiled the churches of the Kremlin of their finest ornaments. The ravages of the fire had lifted the sort of interdict which the Emperor had laid upon Russian possessions.

The most beautiful trophy of this kind was the immense cross of Ivan the Great. It was necessary to demolish part of the tower it surmounted in order to take it down. Even then it was only after long efforts that they succeeded in making the vast mass of iron totter. The Emperor wished to adorn the

dome of the Invalides with it. It was engulfed in the waters of Lake Semlewo.

On the days before the Emperor meant to hold a review, the soldiers showed great eagerness to make themselves tidy, and clean up their weapons, so as partly to conceal the destitution to which they were reduced. The most imprudent among them had cast off their winter garments in order to load themselves with provisions. However, they all took pride in making a good appearance at the reviews; and when the sun, on fine days, shone on the barrels of well-cleaned muskets, the Emperor felt anew some of those emotions of which he was so full on the glorious day of the departure.

The Emperor left twelve hundred wounded men at Moscow; four hundred of these wretches were taken along by the last corps that quitted the city. Marshal Mortier was the last to leave it. At Feminskoë, ten leagues from Moscow, we heard the noise of a frightful explosion: it was the Kremlin, blown up in accordance with the Emperor's orders. Fireworks had been deposited in the vaults of the palace; and all had been calculated so that a certain time would elapse before the explosion. Some Cossacks came to pillage the deserted apartments, in ignorance of the hidden fire beneath their feet; they were hurled to a prodigious height in the air. Thirty thousand muskets had been abandoned in the fortress. In one second a part of the Kremlin was nothing but a mass of ruins. Another part was preserved; and what

contributed not a little to enhance the reputation of their great Saint Nicholas with the Russians, was that a stone image of that saint was spared by the explosion in a spot where the greatest ravages were made. This fact was afterwards reported to me by a person worthy of belief, who had heard it related by Count Rostopchine himself, during his stay in Paris.

October 28, the Emperor resumed the road to Smolensk, passing near the battle-field of Borodino. Nearly thirty thousand corpses had been left on these vast plains. On our approach, clouds of crows, which had been attracted by such abundant pasturage, flew far away from us with horrible croakings. These corpses of so many brave men had a disgusting aspect, being half devoured, and exhaling an odor which the cold, already very keen, could not neutralize. The Emperor had the march accelerated, and went to spend the night in the nearly ruined château of Oupinskoë. The next day he visited some wounded who had remained in an abbey. These unfortunates, on seeing the Emperor, seemed to recover their strength and forget their sufferings, which must have been horrible, the wounds becoming still more inflamed by the earliest frosts. All these pale, tired faces regained a certain serenity. The poor soldiers, pleased to see their comrades again, questioned them with anxious curiosity concerning the events that had followed the battle of Borodino. When they knew that we had bivouacked at Moscow, they rejoiced with all their heart; and

it was easy to see that what they chiefly regretted was to have been unable, like the others, to burn the finest movables of the rich Moscovites at their bivouac fires. Napoleon ordered that each carriage of the train should take along one of these unfortunates, and so it was done. All lent themselves to this work with an alacrity which greatly touched the Emperor. The poor wounded men said with the accent of profound gratitude that they were far better off on these good cushions than in the ambulance wagons. We had no difficulty in believing it. A lieutenant of cuirassiers, who had just had a limb amputated, was put into the landau of His Majesty, who travelled on horseback.

That replies to all the accusations of cruelty so causelessly charged upon the memory of a great man who is no more. I have read, but not without disgust, that the Emperor sometimes had his carriage driven over wounded men, whose cries of anguish did not touch his heart. All that is false and revolting. Not a single one of those who have served the Emperor is ignorant of his solicitude for the unhappy victims of war and the care he had taken of them. Foreigners, enemies, or Frenchmen, all were recommended to the army surgeons with equal interest.

From time to time frightful explosions would make us turn our heads to look behind us. They were caused by ammunition wagons which were blown up to save the trouble of bringing them along, as the march was daily growing more diffi-

cult. It was painful to think that we were reduced to such a point of distress that we must throw our powder to the winds to save it from the hands of the enemy. But a still more sorrowful reflection occurred to the mind with every detonation of this sort: the grand army must quickly extricate itself from ruin, since the material of the expedition overloaded the men, and the number of arms employed was no longer in proportion to the labor.

The 30th the Emperor had his headquarters in a wretched hovel without doors or windows. We had great difficulty in fencing off a little the spot he chose to sleep in. The cold was growing more severe and the nights were freezing; the little fortified palisades which were used as a kind of relays for the mail, and which, placed at regular distances, marked the divisions of the road, also served every evening as imperial headquarters. The Emperor's bed was hastily put up, and a cabinet prepared as well as possible in which he might work with his secretaries and write his different orders to the chiefs whom he had left on the roads and in the towns.

Our retreat was sometimes harassed by parties of Cossacks. These barbarians would come upon us, lance in rest, and roaring like wild beasts rather than uttering human cries. Their little long-tailed horses brushed the flanks for the different divisions. But these reiterated attacks had not, at first at all events, disastrous consequences for the army. When we

heard a hurrah, the infantry would put a good face on the matter, close up their ranks, and present bayonets. It was the cavalry's affair to pursue these barbarians, who fled faster than they had come.

November 6, before he had quitted the army, the Emperor received tidings of the Mallet conspiracy and all that related to it. At first he was astonished, then greatly displeased, and afterwards sneered a good deal over the discomfiture of General Savary, the minister of police. He said repeatedly that if he had been in Paris nobody would have stirred; that he could not leave it without everybody losing their heads at the least rating. From this moment he spoke frequently of the need of his presence in Paris.

Apropos of General Savary, a little fact somewhat mystifying for him occurs to my memory. After having given up the command of the gendarmerie in order to succeed Fouché in the functions of minister of police, he had a brief discussion with an aide-de-camp of the Emperor. As he threatened his interlocutor, the latter replied to him: "You think you will always have handcuffs in your pockets."

November 8, it snowed, the day was gloomy, the cold severe, the wind violent, and the roads covered with sleet. The horses could not go forward; their worn-out shoes could take no hold on this slippery ground. The poor animals were exhausted; it was necessary for the men to push the wheels in order to lighten their burdens in some degree. In the vigor-

ous breathing that issues from the nostrils of a tired horse, in that tension of the hocks and those prodigious efforts of the reins, there is something that gives to a high degree the idea of force; but the mute resignation of these animals when one knows them to be overburdened, awakens pity and makes us repent of abusing so much courage. The Emperor on foot, in the midst of his household, a baton in his hand, walked with difficulty in these slippery paths. But he encouraged one and another with kindly words. We were full of good-will. Whoever had then complained would have been badly received by all. We came in sight of Smolensk. The Emperor was the least dejected. He was pale, but his face was calm; nothing in his features betrayed his moral sufferings, for they would have needed to be very violent for any one to have perceived them in public. The roads were heaped with men and horses dead of fatigue or famine. The men passed on, turning away their eyes. As to the horses, they were a good prize for our famished men.

At last we reached Smolensk on the 9th. The Emperor lodged in a fine house on the Place Neuve. Although this important city had suffered much since we were there, it still afforded resources; provisions of every kind were found in it for the household of the Emperor and the officers; but the Emperor made no account of this privileged abundance, as one might call it, when he learned that the army lacked food and provender. At this news

he flew into a furious rage; never did I see him depart so violently from his characteristic temper. He sent for the commissary who had charge of the provisioning, and apostrophized him in such an unmeasured fashion that the latter turned pale and could not find a word in his own justification. The Emperor insisted with still greater violence, and allowed terrible threats to escape him. I heard the cries from an adjoining chamber. I learned afterwards that the commissary had thrown himself down at His Majesty's knees to obtain his pardon. Calming down from his excitement, the Emperor forgave him. Never, in truth, had he sympathized more keenly with the sufferings of his army; never did he suffer more from his powerlessness to struggle against such multiplied misfortunes.

On the 14th we resumed the road we had passed over some months before under better auspices. The thermometer registered twenty degrees of cold. A wide space still divided us from France. After a slow and painful march, the Emperor arrived at Krasnoi. He was obliged to go himself with his guard to meet the enemy in order to extricate the Prince d'Eckmühl. He passed through the enemy's fire, surrounded by his Old Guard, which serried about its chief its platoons in which grape-shot was making wide gashes. It is one of the grandest examples history gives us of the devotion and love of several thousand men for one alone. While the fire was hottest, the bands were playing the air: *Where can*

one be better off than in the bosom of his family? Napoleon interrupted it, they say, by exclaiming: "Say rather, *Let us watch over the safety of the Empire.*" It is difficult to imagine anything more grand.

The Emperor returned from this combat very much fatigued. He had passed several nights without taking any repose, listening to the reports made him concerning the state of the army, expediting the orders necessary for procuring provisions for the soldiers, and putting in motion the different corps who were to sustain the retreat. Never had his inconceivable activity found more to do; never also had his heart been so high as amidst all these misfortunes of which he seemed to feel the weighty responsibility.

It was between Orcha and the Dnieper that the carriages for which there were no longer any horses were burned. The tumult and discouragement in the rear of the army was so great that the majority of the laggards threw down their weapons there as a wearisome and useless burden. A sort of military police was exercised by order of the Emperor to arrest the disorder so far as possible. The officers of gendarmerie were charged to bring back by force those who abandoned their corps; often they were obliged to prick them in the reins with their swords to make them go forward. The exceeding distress had so altered the soldierly spirit, naturally kind and sympathizing, that those who were most wretched

intentionally spread confusion, so as to wrest from their better-clad companions either clothes or food. "There are the Cossacks!" was, in general, their cry of alarm. When these culpable tricks were discovered, and our soldiers recovered from their apprehension, reprisals were made, and then the tumult reached its height.

The corps of Marshal Davoust was one of the most maltreated in the army. Out of seventy thousand men of which it was composed on setting out, not more than four or five thousand were left, who were all dying with hunger. The Marshal himself was enfeebled; he had neither linen nor bread; want and fatigues of every kind had horribly emaciated his face; his entire person provoked pity. This brave marshal, who had twenty times escaped Russian bullets, beheld himself perishing with hunger. One of his soldiers presented him with a loaf of bread; he seized and devoured it. He was one of those who contained himself the least; wiping his moustaches, where the frost had condensed, he would angrily rail against the evil destiny which had cast them into thirty degrees of cold; for moderation in speech is difficult enough when one is suffering so much.

For some time the Emperor had been in keen anxiety concerning the fate of Marshal Ney, who had been intercepted and obliged to cut his passage through the Russians following us on every side. His alarm increased as time went on. Every min-

ute he would ask if no one had seen Ney, accusing himself of having exposed this brave general too much, and inquiring after him as for a good friend whom one has lost. The entire army shared and manifested the same anxieties; it seemed as if this hero alone were in danger. Some regarded him as lost, and seeing that the bridges of the Dnieper were menaced by the enemy, they proposed breaking them down: there was but one cry throughout the entire army against it. On the 20th, the Emperor, whom this idea had cast into the utmost dejection, arrived at Basanoni. He was dining with Prince de Neufchâtel and the Duc de Dantzic, when General Gourgaud came in haste to announce to His Majesty that Marshal Ney and his men were but a few leagues away from us. The Emperor cried with a joy which is easily conceived: "Is it true?" M. Gourgaud gave him details which were soon spread through all the camp. This news heartened everybody: the men eagerly accosted each other; it seemed as though every one had found a brother; all were talking of the heroic courage he had displayed, the talents he had evinced in saving his troops from the ice, the ravines, and the enemies. And it is true to say, to the immortal glory of Marshal Ney, that according to the opinions I have heard expressed by our most illustrious warriors, his defence is a feat of arms for which antiquity affords no parallel. The hearts of our soldiers throbbed with enthusiasm; and on that day they felt once more the emotions of the most

splendid days of victory! Ney and his division have gained immortality by his prodigious effort of energy and valor. So much the better for the few survivors of that handful of heroes who can read the grand deeds they have done in these annals inspired by them. His Majesty had several times said: "I would give all the money I have in the vaults of the Tuileries if my brave Ney were at my side."

It was Prince Eugène who had the honor of going to meet Marshal Ney with a corps of four thousand veterans. Marshal Mortier had disputed this favor with him, for between those noble men there were never any but such noble rivalries. The danger was immense; the cannon of Prince Eugène was a signal understood by the Marshal, who answered it by platoon firing. The two corps met, and were not yet united when Marshal Ney and Prince Eugène were in each other's arms; they said the latter wept for joy. Such traits make this horrible tableau appear somewhat less gloomy.

As far as Beresina, our march was a mere succession of little combats and great privations.

The Emperor spent one night at Caniwki, in a wooden cabin containing but two rooms; the back one was chosen for him, in the other all his attendants lay down pell-mell. I was more fortunate, for I lay in that of His Majesty; but several times during the night, my duties obliged me to go into the other room, and then I had to stride over sleepers worn out by fatigue; although I took great pains

not to hurt them, they were so crowded that it was impossible not to set foot on legs or arms.

In the retreat from Moscow the Emperor marched on foot, enveloped in his pelisse, and his head covered by a Russian cap which was tied under his chin; I frequently marched near the brave Marshal Lefebvre, who had much affection for me. He said to me in his German French, in speaking of the Emperor: "He is surrounded by a heap of blackguards, who do not tell him the truth; he does not make enough distinction between his good and bad adherents. How will he get out of that, this poor Emperor whom I love? I am always in dread for his life; if nothing but my blood were needed to ensure it, I would spend it drop by drop; but that would not alter anything, and, perhaps, he may still have need of me."

END OF VOLUME III

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